

Rathod Varta

A Heroic Narrative of the Dungri Bhils

Documented and Edited by Bhagwandas Patel

Translated by Nila Shah



Central Institute of Indian Languages

and

Bhasha Research and Publication Centre

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Foreword

‘I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any... I would have our young men and women... to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world.... But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother tongue, or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or own vernacular.’
(Mahatma Gandhi on *English Learning*, *Young India* 01:06:1921)

Traditionally, India is viewed as a pluralistic society that is supportive of all languages—big or small. The Indian Constitution is committed to the language rights of all, including the right to mother tongue education. However, the education system has encouraged more the growth of dominant languages, and in practice, most of the smaller languages are not included. This has resulted in marginalization of diverse linguistic communities and enhanced the threat perceptions to their languages. If recent UNESCO reports are to be believed then we seem to have all kinds of language situations ranging from potentially endangered to those on the verge of extinction.

But the exact picture can only be given if serious research is undertaken to survey the socio-linguistic settings in all states and native speakers are involved as partners to report from within. To safeguard these languages we also need to formulate clear cut plans

for the empowerment of these languages and their speakers. This would involve linking languages with literacy, education, technology and economic opportunities. Fortunately, an institutional arrangement has been put in place to develop all Indian languages, regardless of their status as official languages or their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Bharatiya Bhasha Sansthan or Central Institute of Indian Languages was set up with its main objective being ‘to assist in and coordinate the development of Indian languages, to bring about the essential unity of Indian languages through scientific study and inter-linguistic research and to promote the mutual enrichment of the languages and thus contribute towards emotional integration of the people of this country.’ While spelling out its role as the nodal agency that will coordinate the endeavors of all language institutions, it was expected to function on several fronts including undertaking work that will ‘promote the development of languages of Scheduled Tribes’. The Central Institute of Indian Languages has contributed immensely in this direction and its work on documentation, description and development of minor languages has given it the identity of an institution that values diversity even as it works to promote multilingualism with strong roots in mother tongue.

The Bhili mother tongues are an illustration of this commitment to treating all languages as equal. For years, the Central Institute of Indian Languages undertook experimental work with the Wagdi speaking tribes in Rajasthan and in the process they produced bilingual primers, trained teachers, held orientation camps for administrators dealing with education of these tribes and undertook testing and evaluation work to demonstrate the worthiness of their pursuit of putting mother tongues as partners of official languages. The work was extended to include the Varli tribes in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, where both Dungar Varli and Davar Varli were linked to Marathi and Gujarati respectively, and for years the states were involved to take up their cause. The fact that both the states did not adopt the materials and methods as part of their long term policy only illustrates how complex these issues are and how strong is the resistance to innovative ideas.

It is in these circumstances that the Central Institute of Indian Languages looks for partners who value our mission; and Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, founded by Ganesh Devy, in Vadodara, is one such trusted partner helping us to keep our vision intact. In their case, they have themselves taken the initiative to turn things around by producing materials that will be valued by the readers. The present collection of books that includes three epics in the original—*Gujrano Arelo*, *Rathod Varta* and *Ramsitmani Varta*—and three publications in English translation—*Bharath: An Epic of the Dungri Bhils*, *Rathod Varta: A Heroic Narrative of the Dungri Bhils* and *The Ramayan and other Oral Narratives of the Kunknas* is ample evidence of that spirit which is working for the empowerment of the smaller mother tongues. It is my hypothesis that this work has been positive and has given the Bhil identity a positive value.

As the Census figures illustrate, the group of Bhili mother tongues (seventeen mother tongues are listed in 2001 with more than 10,000 speakers for each) has shown a sudden spurt in its growth from 26% (1971 to 1981) to 29%(1981-1991) to a dramatic 71% (1991-2001).

Decadal Growth of Bhili Mother Tongues (source: Census 2001)

Bhili/Bhilodi -17 mother tongues

Decadal Growth (No. of Speakers)

1971	1981	1991	2001
3,399,285	4,293,314	5,572,308	9,582,957

Percentage wise Decadal Growth

1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001
26.30	29.79	71.97

When the statistics are juxtaposed against the reports of *UNESCO Atlas on Endangered Languages 2009*, where none of the Bhili mother tongues are shown as endangered, the case study becomes even more interesting of a language and its people who want to affirm their presence on the Indian landscape. Being the largest non-scheduled language, their languages must be put on the firm path of development for they have survived the test of time. Teachers who work with these communities must make an effort to

understand these mother tongues and enhance their own multilingual competence.

I hope these books will pave way for their democratic participation on a larger scale and with a sense of dignity they deserve. Eklavya was a determined Bhil who was willing to give up a piece of his hand in gratitude to his teacher but not to abandon the archery and the shooting arrow that always found its mark, and his skills leapt to greater heights in keeping with his soaring spirits.

We wish the readers a good time to draw inwards and discover the strength of their own word.

Rajesh Sachdeva
Director
Central Institute of Indian Languages

The publication of the Dungri Bhil saga *Rathod Varta* documented and edited by Dr. Bhagwandas Patel in the present English translation by Dr. Nila Shah marks a propitious moment in the cultural history of India for various reasons. For one, following the recently published translation of the Dungri Bhil *Bharath*, the Mahabharat epic of the tribe inhabiting the rugged terrain of South Rajasthan and North Gujarat, the range of the tribal epics and sagas have at long last started becoming accessible to the global readership. They have started coming from both sides of the border where the Dungri Bhil and Garasiya hamlets are situated. Recently, Dr. Madan Meena has brought out a wonderfully well documented and translated version of a traditional *phad-katha* from Rajasthan. A decade ago, the Kannada University at Hampi brought out a series of four folk epics from Karnataka. Some of these, such as *Male Madeshwara*, translated by C. N. Ramachandran, are by now available in excellent English translations. Similarly, the *Bharthari* narrative spread across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh too is now available in English rendering by Nandkishore Tiwari.

With these several fascinating narratives now available in English for the pan-Indian and non-Indian readership, it has become possible to think of the literary genre ‘oral epic’ as a component of contemporary literature. For nearly two centuries, the literary scholarship in India has maintained, following the English and European scholars, that oral epic necessarily ‘pre-dates’ literary epics. That such an anachronistic view of the literary forms is based on a complete insensitivity to the complex nature of oral traditions should become clear now, if literary scholars pay a close attention to the phenomenon of tribal epics rapidly unfolding before us in our time. These epics, and other literature of adivasis and the north eastern communities which has started appearing with an unprecedented

vigour, should easily set to rest the view that ‘oral’ is ‘that which is not written’. It is hard to understand the complexities of the oral till it gets defined in purely negative terms as ‘the non-written’. The major works from India’s manifold oral traditions now becoming available to the general readership may help us realize that orality precedes writing ‘in essence’—in the sense speech is a pre-requisite of script—and not as a temporal sequence.

The publication of *Rathor Varta* surely will quicken that common sense but sadly overlooked truth. In the amazingly rich tapestry of Indian literary creativity, an important strand has been the lyrical and dramatic traditions of adivasi communities and the picaresque narratives constructed by the nomadic communities. If the visibility of tribal languages has so far remained somewhat poor, those languages need not be blamed for the want of creativity. The responsibility rests with the received idea that literature in order to be literature has to be written and circulated in a printed form. In most cases the literary works in the languages of India’s adivasi communities have been oral in nature.

The number of languages in which Indian tribal communities have been expressing themselves is amazingly large. Though there are usual problems associated with marking the mother tongue in a multilingual society, the successive Census figures indicate that there exist nearly ninety languages with speech communities of ten thousand or more. When one speaks of literature of the adivasis and the nomads, one is necessarily speaking of all these ‘noted’ neglected languages and many more unnoticed languages. The task is large enough to keep quite a whole academy of folklorists. But, the first few firm steps are now taken.

The publication of the *Rathor* saga needs be welcomed as it brings to the English readership one more contribution of the eminent folklorist Bhagwandas Patel. Dr. Patel has spent a good four decades pursuing the lonely and fraught path of gathering song and story, season after season and year after year, without looking for any material returns. This remarkable scholar is bit of a saint, with all his gentleness, and a bit of a maverick, given that despite excellent research skills that could have taken him up the academic

ladders in any university, he chose to stick to a rural high-school in order to be close to the adivasis, and despite having scintillating oratorical prowess, he avoided giving his time for academic seminars and such like. His is the story of a single minded pursuit of his sole goal: gathering at the dusk of a great civilization its song and story and very nuance of the intimacy between Nature, Animal and Man. Dr. Nila Shah's translation of one of his works published previously in Gujarati, and admired by Gujarati readers, is an overdue and well deserved compliment to his genius.

One feels delighted that the narrative is now available in English. But one also feels deeply concerned about the continuation of the Dungri Bhil imaginative activity. The question is will the narrators survive our age of a mindless destruction of the values with which the Garasia and Dungri Bhil tribals have built their rainbow relation with the eco-system, and their dreams, fears, myths and mindsets? The region in which the saga has been recited over a long period in history is also the area from where stubborn resistance was put up by the villagers during the colonial times. The Rathor, the protagonist of the legend, too displays this quality of digging in his heels in the face of a challenge and posing as an unflinching shield for his people.

One would like to hope that the *Rathor Varta* is not read by the literary world without sparing a thought for the community that has kept the story alive, but whose existence today is under a deep shadow. The best way to read the saga is to think of it as a collective cultural production about the continuation of that collectivity. I am happy that Bhagwandas Patel, Nila Shah and Purva Prakash have brought the saga to us for our collective reflection.

Ganesh Devy
Baroda
October 2012

Preface

The Dungri Bhil community lives in the hilly tracts of the mountain ranges of Aravalli and the surrounding areas in western India, more precisely, in and around the Khedbrahma taluka of Sabarkantha district in north Gujarat. They live in scattered and isolated settlements on the village fringes bordering the hill tracts and forests and depend for their livelihood on farming, labour work and hunting.

A tradition of avenging one's murdered kin prevails among the Dungri Bhils of Gujarat. This ancient practice is an inseparable part of their social custom and is passed from generation to generation. The proverb, 'A Bhil's revenge never gets old' accentuates this age-old practice among the Bhils. This tradition is so deeply embedded in their psyche that even today, they do not feel at ease until a murder is avenged. If the revenge is not exacted immediately, the feud continues in the following generations until the murderer or a member of his family is killed. At times, if both the adversary groups agree, they symbolically exterminate their revenge and bury it deep under a tree to mark its end.

Interestingly, family members of the murdered person pile stones at the spot where the murder has taken place. After taking a pledge to avenge it, the final rites of the deceased are carried out. A small idol of a rider is placed on top of the stone heap. Then the kin of the deceased look out for an earliest opportunity to kill someone from the adversary's family. As soon as the revenge is exacted, they collect the victim's blood in a vessel, slash his head and carry it back with them. On reaching home, they beat a war drum indicating the

fulfillment of their vow. Elated, all their kith and kin gather with their bows, arrows and swords. They assemble at the stone heap. The stones are anointed with the adversary's blood and a portion of it is poured on the head of the rider's statue. Following *kikiyari*—a distinct kind of shriek to express their satisfaction, they sing and dance at the sound of drumbeats. At times, someone very close to the deceased becomes possessed and relates the exact detail of how the murder took place. The kin believe this to be a sign of propitiation and consider that the deceased has come alive through the medium of the possessed person. Then a goat is sacrificed at the site. They all disperse after fixing a day to commemorate the final ritual of Huro.

A rectangular stone structure is erected for the ritual of Huro. All the kin of the deceased assemble at the spot on a previously decided day. They grieve the death by weeping and singing *marasiyas*—songs of mourning. At night, after their meal, the sages sing *bhajans* and everyone joins to sing and dance. Along with the episodes from the *Tale of Hansdev*, the singers sing episodes from *Rathor Varta* and *Pandav ni Varta*. They exalt in their mood of bravery and valour. At dawn a goat is sacrificed and the stone structure is anointed with its blood. After partaking the *prasad* the crowd disperses.

Since *Rathod Varta* depicts incidences of exploits of the Rathods, different episodes from this narrative are sung at the time of Huro. This oral epic is part of a very rich and varied corpus of oral literature of the Dungri Bhils. It is very similar to the oral epic in its form. In Hindi it is categorized as *lokgatha* or *mahagatha*. Every piece of literature should be considered in its proper context, and since the above categories do not exist in the traditional oral literature of the Bhils, I feel that it is useful to use the terms 'folk epic' or 'oral epic' to study these narratives. The Dungri Bhils call their narratives *pazan* (*bhajan*) *varta*. The term *varta* means narrative. Thus many of their longer narratives have the term *varta* at the end of their title. For instance, *Rathod Varta*, *Satia Sadan ni Varta*, *Harsan Raja nu Pazan*, or *Rupa Roni ni Varta* among others. However, the term *pazan* is widely used even for narratives slightly shorter in length and meant to be sung and accompanied by dance. Therefore it is desirable to use the term *varta* for a longer narrative.

Generally, the *bhajan vartas* are narrated at night. After having their evening meals, people assemble at the house of the lead singer who is called *sadh* (sage) in the Dungri Bhili language. On a socio-religious occasion, the narration/performance may take place at the house of the host. When an adequate number of people have arrived, the lead singer lights a lamp and offers a coconut. Then the coconut is broken and its kernel is offered as an oblation to the fire. The *prasad* of this kernel is distributed among the assembled persons. Meanwhile, the gathering too gets prepared for the narration. The accompanists sit on both sides of the lead singer.

The lead singer is called *sadh*, the singers who accompany him are called *banias* and the singers who occasionally prompt or encourage the lead singer are called *honkarias*. The audience is called *hopalvavala* or the listeners. Men and women both can be the *banias* and old and young, men and women, everyone joins the dance during the performance.

The lead singer plucks on his *tambur* immediately after the *banias* have taken their place. He begins with a *bhajan* dedicated to Goddess Sharda and then to Lord Ganpati. He pleads the Goddess and invites her to join the assembled audience. He implores her to remain with him until the end of the session, should his own soul leave his body. He implores the Mother Goddess to inspire his heart with an uninterrupted flow of *bhajans*, and also to loosen the vocal cords of his accompanists. Similarly, he prays to God Ganapati to bless him and his accompanists with an incessant flow of the narrative.

With distribution of the *prasad*, sound of the *tambur* and the *bhajans*, the audience becomes attentive in anticipation. The lead singer, according to the mood of his audience, commences to narrate different episodes from various *bhajan vartas*. Meanwhile, the *banias* utter words as '*Khama*' (May everyone be hale and hearty), '*O malkan*' (Hail our God) to encourage the lead singer. The lead singer, on his part, pronounces words as *jeevta* or *bhalai* to acknowledge the efforts of the *banias*. The audience on its part adds to the sentiment by blowing the conch and sounding the gongs or tongs to invigorate the spirit of the lead singer. This enthuses the lead singer to sing or narrate more animatedly and with much vigour, and the audience,

with a deep faith that the characters of the tale once really existed and tread upon the earth, becomes truly engrossed.

Although the narrative is never sung linearly as a single tale, to avoid the monotony of a lengthy narration the lead singer breaks it into verse and prosaic-verse. While reciting the prosaic verse, the lead singer also plucks on his tambur which gives him time to sense the mood and expectation of the audience, and to conceive the next episode. The *honkarias* play a significant role during such recitations. They remind the lead singer of missing lines or prompt him regarding the next line or episode by reciting a line or uttering a few words. The lead singer is aware that though the tale is stored in his memory, it is not memorized. It is partially memorized and partially remembered. For this reason the lead singer relies on his accompanists for timely prompts. He acknowledges his gratitude towards his *honkarias* and *banias* from time to time and especially towards the end of the narration for without them, he may not be able to render the narration adeptly. He also adds elements of singing, music and dance now and then to ensure active participation of his audience. At times, his accompanists disguise themselves in the outfits of the characters of the tale to make the performance more lively. The performance-narration ends at dawn and *prasad* of *churmu* is distributed to mark the occasion.

Bhajan vartas like *Rupa Roni ni Varta*, *Toli Rani ni Varta*, *Ram de Pir ni Varta*, *Halo Huro*, *Satio Khatu*, *Arahi Kunvar*, *Lalu Arinda*, *Lalu Kunvar*, *Harsan Raja*, *Satio Sardan*, *Aranakara Raja*, *Meran*, *Gorakhnath*, *Masandar nath*, *Gopichand Raja*, *Bhartihari Raja*, *Bal Raja*, *Raadha Shamlo*, *Jadge Parmar*, *Nagji Dalji*, *Halde Holangi*, *Hapia de Hokhalo*, *Hodho Rano*, *Rathod Varta*, *Rom-Sitma ni Varta*, *Bhilo nu Bharath*, *Hat Rukhia* are sung as part of the rituals.

In absence of any written records, to trace the roots of the composition of the first *bhajan varta* is futile, and being a collective possession, it is impossible to say whether any one individual had composed the first narrative. According to the sages and lead singers, the *bhajan vartas* of the Dungri Bhils are as old as the time of creation. In their words, 'At the time of the great deluge, Lord Jalukar, in the form of an egg created plants and vegetation. The *bhajan vartas* are

supposed to have come into existence from that time. In the beginning Phul Rishi, Pipal Rishi and Dhum Rishi of the netherworld used to recite/narrate these *bhajans*, then the Pandavas brought these *bhajans* from the nether world to the earth. Since then we have been singing/narrating them.' Their oral tradition also recounts the antiquity and importance by descriptions as, 'The incident occurred in the *satjug* but is narrated in the *kaljug*,' and 'It's a tale of the exploits of brave and righteous people. Let us narrate the story of the Rathors, a tale of valiant people. Though none of them is alive today, their tale has become immortal.'

One should be aware that the oral narratives of the Bhils are meant not just for entertainment but form integral parts of their rituals. They document the social and cultural ethos of a particular time, and are melodious manifestations of their traditions rendered in the form of recitation and performance.

The present narrative has been documented at Khedva village of Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. The village is situated seventeen kilometers north from Khedbrahma, on the connecting road to Mamer village of Rajasthan. This narrative was recorded in twenty-five audio cassettes in the voice of Natha Bhura Gamar, the lead singer. He was fifty at that time. He has learnt *Rathor Varta* and many other narratives from his guru, Nanji Lakha Khant. His accompanists, Lakha Lala Gamar and Bhikha Badha Taral were in their thirties at the time of the recording. Fourteen *banias* along with Mena Parmar, Nanji Parmar, Gujara Gamar, Lakhma Gamar, Kashna Taral, Deva Taral, Rata Gamar, Sankli Gamar, Homli Gamar, Romi Gamar, Mera Gamar, Kapila Gamar, Shanta Gamar and Baki Gamar accompanied him in the narration and performance. The narrative was documented in 1987 during the occasion of *hura*. Since the entire narrative is not sung or narrated at a time as a linear tale, the missing episodes were recorded on other relevant occasions and a remaining few were recorded at the place of the lead singer.

Bhagwandas Patel
Ahmedabad

Translated from Gujarati by Nila Shah

Living Saga of the Dungri Bhils

Down the ages, scholars and theorists have defined the act of translation in various ways. Howsoever else it may be explained, translation remains the most intimate act of reading, decoding and recoding a text. At a personal level translating *Rathor Varta* has been an intense, exhilarating and at times a frustrating experience. Earlier, I had never experienced difficulties of translation as acutely as I did in the case of *Rathod Varta*. I realised that this happened so because of its deep cultural roots.

Rathor Varta, an oral epic of the Dungri Bhils of Gujarat, is based on the exploits of a hero-god, Pabu, a Rathor Rajput. Pabu is considered as an incarnate God by many nomadic communities of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Panjab. Interestingly, on each side of the border between Gujarat and Rajasthan, narratives of epical length and scope relating to the life of Pabu exist. Various episodes from *Rathor Varta* are recited and performed on different occasions. Nevertheless, the tale is not recited at length as a single narrative. Whereas, its counterpart in Rajasthan is sung by *bhopas*, the itinerant bard singers, who travel from one place to another carrying a rolled cloth-painting known as *par*. On the behest of their audience or the benefactors, the *bhopas* recite and perform the story, indicating corresponding pictures depicted on the *pars*. Though at the centre of both tales lies birth, exploits, death and avenging of Pabu's death, they diverge considerably from each other in the matter of content and stylistic graces, thereby opening possibilities for comparison and research.

The narrative of the Dungri Bhils led me into their world

hitherto unknown to me and many of my contemporaries. The narrative is a cultural legacy of the Dungri Bhils, inhabiting the mountain ranges of Aravalli in and around Khedbrahma taluka of Sabarkantha district in Gujarat. Despite the prefix 'dungri', referring to those inhabiting hilly areas, the Dungri Bhils are not much different from their Bhil counterparts elsewhere in India.

The Bhils form the third largest tribal group of India, next only to the Gonds and the Santhals and are spread across the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Numerous legends and beliefs prevail regarding their origin but they lack in scientific support and explanation. One can only draw inferences about their origin. In the ancient times, they were also known as Kol, Kirat, Nishad, Shabar and Pulinda. Many scholars maintain that the Bhils are descendants of the Nishads, and their arrival in India pre-dates the advent of the Aryans. Many researchers of recent times believe that the Bhils belong to Proto-Australoid or Adi-Nishad race.

The Bhils are divided into clans and the clans into families. However, such divisions are for the most part based on geographical or vocational factors and do not reflect a socio-economic hierarchy. The clan is an important component of their social structure. For the Bhils, loyalty to one's clan is only next to that of one's family. Dungri Bhils live in small groups, sharing all the natural resources including land and water. The ownership of a piece of land, therefore, is collective and the Bhils usually do not sell their land or any of its yield. They use this resource primarily for their subsistence. However, the impact due to globalisation has considerably altered the situation.

Apart from *Rathor Varta*, the corpus of Dungri Bhili literature has three other narratives of epical length and nature. Among these *Rom-Sitma ni Varta* and *Bhilo nu Bharat* are the Bhili versions of the stories of the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* respectively; whereas, *Gujarano Arelo* encompasses the life stories of native heroes. These tales not only allude to the belief, customs or rituals of their community, but also underline their faith and respect in their traditional ways of life. It should be remembered that these narratives

known as *bhajan varta* in their language, are specific to certain traditions. In the context of these long narratives, the term ‘traditional’ is very significant, implying a depth of meaning set into that literature, from its origin, by previous generations. According to Bhils, the incidents depicted in their narratives occurred long, long ago but are still vivid in their memory. For them, ‘the tale never ends’ as it is closely related to their lives, identity and existence. Viewed from this perspective, text and context are inseparable, and without a sympathetic knowledge of the context, the text may be misunderstood.

The oral narratives of the Bhils are not meant merely for entertainment, but are integral to rituals. They document social and religious ethos of a particular time and are melodious manifestations of their traditions. Steeped in traditional and contemporary customs, rites and rituals of their society, these narratives are rendered in the form of recitation and performance. The lead singer skillfully fuses music and narrative to make the entire experience more effective.

During any celebration not only the kin of the concerned family, but everyone from the neighbourhood assembles and participates in the performance. Besides the mood created by the occasion, the enthusiasm and fervour of the audience greatly stimulate the lead singer. The lead singer sings in a living context, before an audience that belongs, more often than not, to his own community. Before a large and receptive audience, he feels charged and inspired and the recalling of different episodes becomes more accurate and intense. Recitation of various episodes invokes different impressions in the gathering and builds up emotions. The longer narratives are seldom sung at a stretch. Different episodes from various narratives are recited to mark an occasion. For instance, during the performance of the *huro* rite, people become very excited as the rite is performed after exacting revenge of a murdered kin. Episodes of bravery and heroic exploits from *Rathor Varta* and *Bhilo nu Bharat* are narrated and performed on this occasion. The lead singer aptly reading the minds of his audience, switches from one incident to another, building and reinforcing the mood of his listeners.

Since these long narratives are composed orally without the aid of any written medium and are meant for oral presentation or performance for specific occasions, the singer of such narratives must possess a prodigious memory and an extensively versatile and highly traditional language.

In fact, every culture seeks and discovers its truth or essence in the particular order of meanings inherent in the structure of its language. Every language reflects the specificities of community, culture and religious sect of its users. A folk or oral epic in particular, employs a highly formulaic language, sanctioned and developed over a long course of time by successive generations of the poets, composers and singers. Eventually, some of the widely used terms become stock expressions for battle scenes, stereotyped similes, describing a natural or other phenomenon. Narration of the tale is facilitated by accompanists known as a *banio* (*baniaa* in plural) and a *honkario* (*honkaria* in plural). The former prompts the lead singer with key words whereas the *honkaria* cheers the singer with encouraging words. In the Bhili context, the *baniaa* facilitate the narration by piercing the amorphous form of the narrative in the mind of the lead singer. The lead singer, well aware of the significance of his accompanists, pays due respect to them before the commencement of the narration.

These narratives bearing arcane rites and rituals, convey their traditions and knowledge systems. They are like books of life, treatises on their code of conduct. Their ethics and value systems are weaved in the very fabric of these tales, revealing their worldview to empathetic listeners and readers.

My initial glimpse into the tribal world and their oral literature evoked a deep sense of sadness which has stayed with me in all its sharpness for several reasons. On the one hand it has taught me to look at my own culture with a fresh insight, and on the other, it has engendered a sense of urgency to learn more about this culture before time causes any more loss of the lore. My readings of *Rathor Varta* have transported me into a different world. Translating a work from a Adivasi language into English was a unique experience. *Rathod Varta* has been documented in the Dungri Bhili language spoken by

the Bhil community of north Gujarat. To translate the epic from the standard Gujarati paraphrase provided by the compiler-editor of the documented text felt like being twice removed from the original. I preferred to translate from the original Dungri Bhili language, which did mean an extra effort but that helped me to retain some of the intensity and beauty of the original.

However, while approaching this text I realized that decoding and translating this text into a foreign language posed its own set of challenges. In order to retain the rustic simplicity of the Dungri Bhili language—the most challenging aspect to convey into English—I have strived to keep as close as possible to the structure of the narrative by following a few simple practices. One of the features of *Rathod Varta* is repetition, either of a single line or a group of lines. Usually, the first two lines of a stanza are sung twice. I found that retaining this style not only invests this piece of oral performance with an intensity or depth by way of emphasis, but also helps to retain its ‘Bhilianness’. Nevertheless, various levels of vocalizations of a story-telling performance defied any kind of transfer into the print medium through the usual prose form. In fact, the difference between prose and verse in Bhili literature is one of spirit rather than of form, and the passages that give impression of a prose on a printed page, are not narrated as prose-pieces, but are also meant for singing in a particular way. Scholars believe that the parts presented as verse are memorized by the singer-performers and would seldom be changed. Whereas the passages resembling prose are used as a device of elaborating, stretching or reducing the length of the narrative. Such passages also give breathing time to the lead singer.

The syntax of the Bhili language proved to be a major challenge. Although not very different from that of modern Gujarati, it was naturally at odds with English. At times it was difficult to ascertain between the first person and third person narration. In such cases, I have either turned the narrative into third person or have added phrases like ‘he said’ or ‘he pondered’ for the sake of clarity. Similarly, shifts between the time frames have been addressed by using the past tense throughout the translation. Culture specific terms are explained in the glossary appended to the translated text. By way of

conclusion, I must confess that I have negotiated with both, texts and culture—linguistically and otherwise—to produce a comprehensive and coherent effect.

Translation does not ensue in a vacuum but in a continuum. Besides the appeal of the original text and the compelling urgency it creates on the psyche of the translator, some fellow human beings also play a vital role in producing a piece of translation. And I am happy for not standing apart as an exceptional individual. My first and foremost debt is to Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh who initiated me into the field of translation and then into the realm of Adivasi literature. I feel highly grateful to Dr. Bhagvandas Patel, the editor-compiler of *Rathor Varta*, for not only granting me his consent to translate the work, irrespective of my competence as a translator, but also for the patient lessons he gave me in the Dungri Bhil language. I am indebted to Prof. Ganesh Devy for multiple reasons. Initially, for instilling confidence in me when I was on the verge of abandoning the task for lack of it, and later, for his moral support and more so for his generosity with the deadlines. I would like to thank Dr. Brian Coates, scholar of Cultural Studies at the University of Limerick, who read the entire manuscript in its faltering phases and gave critical comments and useful suggestions. I am grateful to the Central Institute of Indian Languages for extending support to the publication. I thank my mom and son for their unwavering love and support for my academic pursuits. I acknowledge the encouragement and help received from wonderful friends, Valentina and Ami Sinroja and my cousin Mansi. Sonal Baxi, Shae Jonson and Niraj Kenge who have made the publication possible and my colleagues at Shri Jasani Arts and Commerce College, Rajkot, for your continued support and concern for my work, I thank you all.

Nil Shah
Rajkot
October 2012

RATHOR VARTA

A HEROIC NARRATIVE OF THE DUNGRI BHILS





KESARI RATHOR

On an auspicious day...*ra*¹ ...

On an auspicious day...*ra*...*ji*² ...

The sun shone brightly...*ra*...

The sun shone brightly over the world...*ra*...*ji*...

What can we say about the fame of Gadh Gujhanian?

We sing in its praises.

Who reigned over Gadh Gujhanian?

Who reigned over Gadh Gujhanian?

The Rathors ruled over Gadh Gujhanian.

The Rathors ruled over Gadh Gujhanian.

A valiant son of the land,

Dhan Rathor, the great, ruled over the kingdom.

(An accompanist: *Jeevta*!³ The lead singer: *Bhalai*!⁴ *Jeevta*!)

⁵Dhan Rathor was the ruler.

A Rathor was the ruler.

Dhan Rathor was the ruler of Gadh Gujhanian.

Bhim was Dhan Rathor's son.

He was Dhan Rathor's son.

Bhim was Dhan Rathor's son.

Glory be to the mother who bore him.

Glory be to the mother who bore him.



His birth was announced by sounding golden gongs.

Dhandhal was the heir of Bhim Rathor.

He was the heir of Bhim Rathor.

Dhandhal was Bhim Rathor's heir.

Dhandhal and Kesari,

Dhandhal and Kesari,

Made a remarkable pair of brothers!

Long live the Rathors!

Long live the Rathors!

May their mother live hale and hearty!

They were the pride of the land.

They were the pride of the land.

Their bravery was matchless.

The Rathors were the jewels of the land.

They were the jewels of the land.

They were admired by one and all.

But when the lords will die,⁶

When the lords will die,

Even the trees will shed their leaves.

⁷ (*Tambur*)⁸ *O maharaj!*⁹

On an auspicious day, the narrator recounts the story, and the entire court listens to him intently. This particular incident occurred in *satjug* but is narrated during *kaljug*. This is a tale about the exploits of brave and righteous people. Let us narrate the story of the Rathors, a tale of valiant people. Though none among them is alive today, their tale remains immortal. The Rathors reigned over Gadh Gujhanian. Bhim Rathor was the son of Dhan Rathor. Dhandhal and Kesari were the sons of Bhim. What an extraordinary pair of brothers they were! They ruled over Gadh Gujhanian. They glowed as the light of lamps. They were the tigers of the land. They were admired by one and all. *O maharaj!* One day an incident occurred



which turned out to be very auspicious. Those were the days of *Jeth* and *Ashadh*. The clouds loomed large on the horizon. Streaks of lightening danced across the sky. The monsoon had arrived. Bird-songs trilled from countless vivid throats. The earth looked fresh and new. Lightning illuminated the horizon.

Kesari Rathor was in deep slumber. Queen Morchang, wife of Dhandhal, the king, said to her brother-in-law, ‘O *devar*, you are a farmer’s son. Why is there slumber in your eyes? It is drizzling and the *kuria* fields are wet. How can you, as a farmer’s son, feel sleepy at such a moment? My boy, it is wise to go to bed in time and awaken when first light catches sight.’ O *maharaj*! Thus the *bhabhi* chided her *devar*, ‘Listen, farmers cannot afford to have eye-lids that fall like leaves in sleep. How can slumber seal your eyes? Wake up at once and yoke your oxen. Get hold of your plough.’ O *maharaj*! On hearing his *bhabhi*’s words, Kesari Rathor sprang at once on his feet. He cleansed his teeth with the *kaniyor datan*. He yoked his oxen and adorned them. *Bhalai!* (*Tambur*)

Thus spoke *bhabhi*,
Thus she spoke,
‘O *devar*, listen to what I say.’

‘We are the children of a farmer, O Kesari.
We are born as farmers.
We live a life of contentment.’

‘The spikes of your plough, O Kesari,
The spikes of your plough,
Sharpen the spikes of your plough.’

Thus spoke Kesari,
Thus he spoke,
‘Listen to what I say, O *bhabhi*.’

‘Give me the seeds and grains, O *bhabhi*.
Give me the seeds and grains.
It is now time to sow them.’



Seeds of *kuri* and *banti*,
Seeds of *kuri* and *banti*,
She handed him a bundle of *kuri* and *banti* seeds.

Kesari trod along the road.
He trod along the road.
He arrived at the field.

Kesari placed the bundle at the edge of the farm.
He placed the seeds at the edge of the farm.
He secured the plough with a harrow.

Kesari yoked the plough.
He yoked the plough.
He ploughed the field from east to west.

As soon as the Rathor cut the first furrow,
When he cut the first furrow,
A pair of cymbals and a tambur surfaced from the soil.

As Kesari ploughed the second furrow,
As he ploughed the second furrow,
He noticed a string of prayer beads.

A string of prayer beads,
A string of prayer beads,
God's string of beads came into sight.

Kesari took the cymbals and the tambur.
He took the cymbals and the tambur.
He put them aside in a corner.

As Kesari cut the third furrow,
When he cut the third furrow,
A gold-encrusted censer appeared.

As Kesari continued to till,
As he continued to till,
Bhakti appeared before him.



Bhakti appeared before Kesari.
 She appeared before him.
 Rarely does she appear before people.
 Kesari was overwhelmed.
 He was overwhelmed.
 He offered his respect by lighting incense.
 Kesari set aside his plough.
 He set aside his plough,
 And unyoked his oxen.
 Kesari drew out the nose-string.
 He drew out the nose-string.
 The nose-string of his oxen he removed .
 He stroked and patted his oxen.
 He stroked and patted his oxen.
 ‘O oxen, please listen to what I say.’
 ‘We’ll part today, O oxen!
 We’ll part today.
 Live your life as destined.’
Jeevta! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Kesari Rathor unyoked his oxen and set them free. He took off their nose-strings. He stroked and patted them. He spoke words of wisdom to them, ‘May God be with you. You’ve helped me get my meals. We’ve toiled together for years. I may have harassed and beaten you at times. I may have abused or thrashed you. Please forgive me, O oxen, for my ill-treatment. We must part now. I’ll receive what fate has in store for me. May you live as your destiny leads you! Today, I set you free.’ Kesari Rathor said to the black ox, ‘Go to the forest and turn into a blue bull.’ To the white ox Kesari said, ‘O white one, be a stud bull and wander along with the herd of cows. Adorn the herd as a crown. May God be with you!’



Kesari picked the cymbals and the tambur.
 He picked the cymbals and the tambur.
 He picked them to sing *bhajans*.

The gold-encrusted censer,
 The gold-encrusted censer,
 He cleaned the censer with one end of his turban.

Dry and damp dung pats,
 Dry and damp dung pats,
 He gathered the dry and damp dung pats.

Kesari kindled a sacred fire.
 He kindled a sacred fire.
 He lit the incense in the censer.

Kesari held the prayer beads.
 He held the prayer beads.
 The string of prayer beads he held in his hand.

Kesari offered *gugal* to the sacred fire.
 He offered gugal to the sacred fire.
 He offered gugal to the fire.

Kesari Rathor started singing bhajans.
 He started singing bhajans.
 He plucked at the tambur strings as he sang bhajans.

His bhabhi arrived with his afternoon meal.
 She arrived with his afternoon meal.
 She came with *rotlas* of *kuri* and *kodra*.

She was carrying an earthenware full of buttermilk.
 She was carrying an earthenware full of buttermilk.
 She was toying with her kerchief.

'I can't see the oxen.
 I can't see the oxen.
 Where has Kesari led them?'



Closer and closer she arrived.

Closer and closer she arrived.

She came close to the field.

Kesari was absorbed in singing bhajans.

He was absorbed in singing bhajans.

He was engrossed in singing bhajans.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Kesari Rathor offered gugal to the sacred fire and sang bhajans. He chanted God's name over the prayer beads. Engrossed in worship, he sang bhajans, one after the other. Meanwhile at noon, his bhabhi prepared rotlas for him. She set off with buttermilk and rotlas made of kuri and kodra. She walked towards the kuria field. As she came nearer, she strained her eyes. Neither the oxen nor their owner were in sight. 'Where might they be?' thought she, 'Where is my devar? Which field is he ploughing?' She narrowed her eyes as she neared the field. She caught sight of the sacred fire. Kesari was singing bhajans. 'O, he has done ill in the world,' thought his bhabhi, 'This enemy of mine has driven the oxen away.' She felt annoyed and enraged. She loomed over her devar and said, 'O devar, what are you up to? Have you gone out of your senses? You must be crazy! Who has misled you?' Kesari Rathor pondered silently for a while, 'I have been distracted. This is inauspicious. I despise such an act. I feel pained. How bitter and unkind is my bhabhi!' He continued to listen silently to his bhabhi's outburst.

'Listen to what I say, O devar,' said Kesari's bhabhi.

'Listen to what I say.

I speak from my heart.'

'You have strayed, O devar.'

'You've strayed.

Has someone deluded you?'

'One needs to toil to live, O devar.'



‘One needs to toil to live.
We must eat to live.’

‘One cannot pray when one is hungry, O devar.
One cannot pray when one is hungry.
We cannot worship unless our belly is full.’

‘One cannot sing bhajans unless one’s belly is full, O devar.
One cannot sing unless one’s belly is full.
We need to eat to be able to sing.’

‘You are a farmer’s son, O devar.
You are a farmer’s son.
Pray, why are you treading on the path of *bhakti*?’

‘Do not rely on bhajans alone, O devar.
‘Don’t rely on bhajans alone.
You need to earn your meals.’

Thus quarreled bhabhi with her devar.
Thus quarreled bhabhi with her devar.
They engaged in a dispute.

‘Must you be so rude, O bhabhi?’ asked Kesari.
‘Must you be so rude?’
‘May such a shrew be ruined!’

Bhabhi spoke, her voice soaked in scorn,
She said, her voice soaked in scorn,
‘O devar, I implore you, please listen to me.’

‘Wait a while and see if your bhakti alone can keep you alive,
O devar.

Wait and see if your bhakti alone can keep you alive.
You’ll soon realize that you cannot survive on bhajans alone.’

‘Do not ever enter my village, O devar.
Do not ever enter my village.
Never set foot in Gadh Gujhanian ever again.’



‘Don’t ever darken my door again, O devar.
Don’t ever darken my door again.
Sing bhajans to acquire your meals.’

Silently, Kesari listened to his bhabhi’s taunts.
He listened to her taunts in silence.
Tears streamed down his cheeks.

‘Bhabhi, listen to what I say.
Listen to what I say.
O bhabhi, I implore you to listen to me.’

‘Please look after my brother’s well-being, O bhabhi.
Look after my brother’s well-being.
Take good care of my brother, Dhandhal.’

‘Take care of yourself too, O bhabhi.
Take care of yourself.
I’m parting from my beloved brother.’

‘Rule peacefully over Gadh Gujhanian, O bhabhi.
Rule peacefully over Gadh Gujhanian.
I relinquish my claim over this land.’

‘See to the well-being of our people, O bhabhi.
See to the well-being of our people.
Make sure that our workers and granary keepers are happy.’

‘Ensure that the traders and brahmins are happy, O bhabhi.
Ensure that the traders and the brahmins are happy.
See that the labourers and potters live happily.’

‘The maids who take care of my bedchambers, O bhabhi,
The maids who take care of my bedchambers,
Please look after their well-being.’

Kesari prostrated over and again.
He prostrated over and again.
He bowed in the direction of Gadh Gujhanian.



‘I swear not to set foot in Gadh Gujhanian again, O bhabhi.
I swear not to set foot here again.
I vow not to accept even a grain of food from your hands.’
Thus the devar chose the path of bhakti.
He chose to follow the path of bhakti.
He held aloft his tambur.

The devar departed.
Thus he departed.
He left Gadh Gujhanian forever.

Bhabhi watched her departing devar.
She watched her departing devar.
Suddenly, tears trickled down her cheeks.

‘May I be cursed! I banished my devar,’ thought the queen.
I forced my devar into exile.
Bitter tears fell from her eyes.

(An accompanist: O, he won’t turn back now, how much you cry!)

She wept and wailed.
She wept and wailed.
‘Whom shall I now address as my devar?’

Jeevta!

‘O devar, why have you chosen the path of bhakti? Bhakti will not provide you with food. The path of bhakti won’t help you to live.’
(The accompanists clang the cymbals loudly).¹⁰

‘O devar, why have you swerved from your duties? Your chosen path is not appropriate for you. Only idlers follow such a path. Ascetics and anchorites walk upon it. It is a course chosen by alms-seekers. It does not befit householders as us. Why do you prefer to follow the path of bhakti? One cannot worship God when one is hungry. One cannot frolic and sing unless one’s belly is full. Wealth brings luster



to one's life. Must you turn away from your duties? Who will support and sustain you? Certainly not I.' *O maharaj!* The devar's beloved bhabhi spoke in a voice soaked in scorn, 'O devar, never set foot in my palace with a tambur in hand, I'll die of shame. We belong to a noble clan. Why do you disgrace us so? Indeed, neither your tambur nor your cymbals will help to sustain yourself. I forbid you to enter our town of Gadh Gujhanian ever again.'

O maharaj! Kesari Rathor stood aghast, 'She has done ill in the world. She has said harsh words. In the name of Gadh Gujhanian, she has taunted me. However, I'm intoxicated with bhakti. I have surrendered to Mother Bhakti's will; I'll survive on the strength of her name. She'll satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. But bhabhi is ignorant of the ways of bhakti. Why should she admonish me?' Kesari pondered for a while, 'If you wish O bhabhi, I'll give up my claim over the kingdom. May you be the lone ruler of Gadh Gujhanian. But you should not have stood between my brother and I. You picked a feud for no reason. You've abused and exiled me from Gadh Gujhanian but please look after my brother's well-being. Be sure that my uncles and cousins fare well. See to the well-being of the people of Gadh Gujhanian. Make certain that our counselors and storekeepers are happy. Ensure that the traders, labourers and potters live in peace. Watch over the welfare of the maids that serve us. May you always be happy. I wish you well as I depart. I bid you farewell, O beloved bhabhi.' Kesari held high his tambur and set off for an unknown land.

His beloved bhabhi watched him go. 'I have not done the right thing,' she thought, 'I didn't mean to send him away.' But Kesari was no longer within sight. Tears trickled down her cheeks. She wept and wailed, 'O devar, why don't you return? Forget our dispute and return home. I'll take you to the palace of clouds. I'll have you seated in the best *hindola*. You may eat, drink and prosper ever after. Do not take my words to heart. Do not depart. O devar, I plead you to come back.'

'O bhabhi, I've sworn not to return. Neither a drop of water nor a



single grain of Gadh Gujhanian will touch my lips. Earnestly, I wish you well. But you must not bring my name to your lips ever again. Don't call me your devar anymore.' With these words Kesari Rathor hurriedly tore his way. 'What should I do to bring him back?' his bhabhi pondered for a while, 'Listen, O, farms and fields by the roadside, I implore you to block my devar's path. How will I face my people? My husband will be cross. What should I do to bring him back? Certainly, I've made a mistake.' (*Khama, Khama!*)¹¹

(*Tambur*) O maharaj! The queen said, 'I entreat you, O Bhavani Jogni, please stand by me. I entreat you to help me. Please make my devar come back. O Bhavani Jogni, I plead you to reside on the blade of my sword and obstruct the path of Kesari Rathor.' Unperturbed, Kesari Rathor picked a leaf of *halri*. He slashed the blade of the leaf to ward off the spell set by Jogni. He trudged on, without glancing back. His bhabhi wondered, 'How should I make him return?' She invoked Khetlo, the guardian deity of the fields and farms. The deity cast a spell. Kesari picked a neem leaf. He tore it to ward off the deity's spell. He trudged on without glancing back. May you be well, O *honkaria*.¹² Life is short but the tale never ends.¹³

Bhabhi wept and wailed.

'I've lost my devar forever.

I've lost my devar forever.'

'I've erred in this part of the world.

I've erred in this part of the world.

I made my devar depart.'

(An accompanist: He has become an ascetic. The lead singer: *Khama!*)

'I'll never set foot again in Gadh Gujhanian, O bhabhi.

I'll never again set foot there.

I'll go to Kashi and embrace a wishful death.'

Undeterred travelled Kesari.

Undeterred travelled he.



Tears glistened in his eyes.

Kesari headed towards the town of Kashi.

He headed towards the town of Kashi.

He travelled without rest.

Feeling dejected and downcast,

Feeling dejected and downcast,

Dejected and downcast Kesari entered Kashi.

Kesari wandered in the lanes and alleys of Kashi.

He wandered in the lanes and alleys of Kashi.

He strolled leisurely in Kashi.

The green fields of Kashi enthralled him.

The green fields of Kashi enthralled him.

He lingered in the fields for sometime.

He went to a glistening green garden.

He went to a glistening green garden.

He ambled around in the garden.

Blushing flowers bloomed in the garden.

Blushing flowers bloomed in the garden.

Koels cooed on the shady trees.

Kesari breathed in the scent.

He breathed in the scent.

Intoxicated with the fragrance, he arrived at Manek Chawk.

Kesari called the saw-man,

He called the saw-man,

‘O brother saw-man, listen to what I say.’

‘I wish to embrace death, O brother.

I wish to embrace death.

Only death will fulfill my wishes.’

‘Why do you want to embrace death, O brother?’



Why do you want to embrace death?
Tell me, why are you so distressed?’ asked the saw-man.
‘I am already slain by insults, O brother,’ said Kesari.
‘I am already slain by insults.
My beloved bhabhi’s words have killed me.’
(An accompanist: Is it so, brother? The lead singer: Yes, it is so.)
‘Her insults have stung me deeply, O brother.
Her insults have stung me deeply.
My bhabhi’s harsh words have pierced me.’
‘Tell me about yourself, O brother,’ said the saw-man.
‘Tell me about yourself.
Where is your house and home?’
‘I belong to a place called Gadh Gujhania, O brother.
I belong to a place called Gadh Gujhania.
I’m the brother of Dhandhal, the king,’ said Kesari.
‘Why did she jeer at you?’ asked the saw-man.
‘Why did she jeer at you?
For what reason has she slighted you?’
‘I chose to follow the path of bhakti, O brother.
I chose to follow the path of bhakti.
It annoyed her excessively,’ said Kesari.
The saw-man struck Kesari with his saw.
He struck Kesari with his saw.
Kesari was beheaded in a single stroke.
Kesari died a noble death.
He died a noble death.
He embraced death for the sake of bhakti.
The saw-man slashed Kesari’s neck from left to right.
He slashed Kesari’s neck from left to right.



He wielded the saw from left to right.

(The lead singer: *Jeevta!*)

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

Kesari Rathor set off for Kashi. He arrived in the small and beautiful town of Kashi. He wandered in the streets and alleyways of Kashi. He went to a glistening green garden. *Bhalai! (Tambur) O maharaj!* He ambled about the glistening green garden. Over and again, he breathed in the scent. Black-winged koels and yellow-winged parrots sang all day long. Jet-black drones buzzed and hovered over the flowers. The glistening green garden was in full bloom. Kesari breathed in the scent over and again, and went to the marketplace.

Bhalai! Jeevta! (Tambur) He went to Manek Chawk and called upon a saw-man. ‘O, my brother, I’m your solemn brother. Please grant me a death wish. Sever my head with your saw, impatiently I await my end.’ The saw-man asked with compassion, ‘O brother, why do you wish to embrace death? What ails you? Why are you so desperate?’ Kesari Rathor poured his heart out. He opened his heart to the saw-man, ‘I’m Kesari Rathor of Gujhanian. I used to reign over Gadh Gujhanian with my brother, Dhandhal. Hurt by my bhabhi’s insults, I yearn for death.’ ‘Why did she slight you? Why did she jeer at you? It’s strange to die for a woman’s sake. Brother, you are rather too young to embrace death.’ (The accompanists clang the cymbals loudly). Kesari Rathor said, ‘O brother, one day, while I was tilling my farm, Goddess Bhakti appeared before me. She blessed me to walk on the path of devotion. I held the cymbals and the tambur in my hands. I sang in the praise of God. I chanted bhajans to please the deities. This drove my bhabhi mad. Her jibes and taunts have cut me to the core. I’m determined to live or die for the sake of bhakti, all else seems futile and meaningless. Aspirations for wealth seem meaningless. I am inclined to live a life of devotion. Why should one indulge in worldly pleasures? I prefer to leave all worries behind and embrace the glorious path of bhakti. Let bhakti and bhakti alone redeem me in this life, and in the lives to come.’



(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Kesari Rathor embraced his destined death. The saw-man held high his saw over the head of the undaunted man. He thought, 'Valiant is he, who can look into the eyes of death!' He slashed Kesari's head from left to right. Blood-drops splashed around. Mori and Makwana, Dodiya and Suvan were born from Kesari's blood drops. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.





DHANDHAL, THE KING

Dhandhal was the supreme ruler.

He was the supreme ruler.

He was the sovereign of Gadh Gujhanian.

Khensi was the ruler.

He was the ruler.

Kalu, the Khensi, was the ruler of Jhayeria.

Jhayeria was struck by famine.

It was struck by famine.

Lack of rain left Jhayeria barren and parched.

Water had receded to the netherworld.

Water had receded to the netherworld.

Mothers cast aside their suckling babies.

(An accompanist: Can this ever happen? The lead singer: Of course, such things happen in extreme times.)

Water became scarce.

Water became scarce.

The bottom of the granary lay bare.

Trees shed their leaves.

Trees shed their leaves.

No greenery could be seen.

People dropped dead like flies.

People dropped dead like flies.



O, it was a time of such calamity!

Everything was in plenty in Gadh Gujhanian.

Everything was in plenty.

Gadh Gujhanian was blessed with nature's abundance.

Kalu set out in search of green pastures.

He set out in search of green pastures.

He looked for grazing land.

Kalu spotted grass fields.

He spotted grass fields.

Kalu came upon grass fields.

Kalu saw green pastures at last.

He saw the pastures at last.

His eyes viewed the land of Gadh Gujhanian with delight.

Kalu took the way to Gadh Gujhanian.

He took the way to Gadh Gujhanian.

He arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

The king was seated in his court.

He was seated in his court.

Dhandhal, the king, was sitting upright.

Court matters were being discussed.

Court matters were being discussed.

Kalu swiftly went towards the court.

Kalu arrived at the court.

He arrived at the court.

He arrived at the court of King Dhandhal.

Kalu bowed and called out greetings.

He bowed and called out greetings.

He paid his respect to King Dhandhal.

The Rathor king acknowledged his courtesy.

He acknowledged his courtesy.



He graciously accepted Kalu's greetings.

Kalu sat on the tasseled rug.

He sat on the tasseled rug.

He was seated on the tasseled rug.

Opium-drinks were being served generously.

Opium-drinks were being served generously.

The hookahs were filled with the best hemp.

Dhandhal said to his guest,

He said to his guest,

'Listen to what I say, O Kalu.'

'Speak your mind.

Speak your mind.

Tell me why have you come here.'

Kalu spoke with respect,

He spoke with respect,

'Please listen to my tale of woe, O king.'

'I'm dismayed and distressed.

I'm dismayed and distressed.

I come from a drought-stricken land.'

'We live a life of deprivation and misery.

We live a life of deprivation and misery.

We are in dire straits.'

Bhalai! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The Rathors ruled over Gadh Gujhanian. *(Tambur)* The Khensis reigned over Jhayeria. Kalu tore along the path, raising clouds of dust as he travelled. Jhayeria was struck by a terrible drought. Mothers forsook their suckling babies. Water was scarce and trees shed their leaves. Deprivation and misery prevailed. People dropped like flies.



Many cows died for shortage of grass. Devoid of hope, death ridden air blew across the land. Kalu Khensi was perturbed. He pondered for a while. 'How can the cattle be kept alive? How can I help my people to survive? I must find a way out.' He set out in search of pastures. He arrived at Gadh Gujhania. Lo and behold! Pods of grain were tossing their heads. An expanse of *jhenjhvo* grass covered the land. A stretch of wild *bhogti* grass danced in the gentle breeze. Wherever he set his eyes, he saw God's plenty.

(Audience: There was no dearth of anything.)

(*Tambur*) O *maharaj*! Kalu Khensi went to Nalna Well. He visited the Dipawali Tank and the pasturage at Jhenjhania. Wherever he went, he found everything in abundance. He went straight to the court of King Dhandhal. Dhandhal sat amidst his courtiers. He was surrounded by his counsellors and officials. Traders and jesters, millers and vendors, sat around him. How proudly and upright he sat! Tales of bravery were being narrated. Sumptuous steaks of goat meat were being served. The best of liquor was being passed from hand to hand. The counsellors were discussing courtly matters. Opium drinks were being served generously. The hookahs were filled with the best hemp. The Rathor king was in the best of spirits. Kalu Khensi arrived at the scene. He went straight to the king's court. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) He bowed and paid his respect to the king. Dhandhal acknowledged his courtesy. Kalu took a seat on a tasseled rug. He was offered the hookah and opium-drink. He felt cool and composed. Then King Dhandhal asked him the purpose of his visit. 'No one gets anything unless one asks for it,' said the king. Thus he urged Kalu to speak. (*Tambur*) *Khama!*

O *maharaj*! Thus spoke Kalu Khensi, 'Please listen to what I say. Jhayeria is badly struck by famine. We have lost all hope and are distressed. Cows have died in great numbers. People drop like flies. Mothers forsake their suckling babies and cows abandon their calves. It's difficult to survive. I've set out in search for green pastures. Thus, I have arrived in your land. The pasturages here are greener than elsewhere. The bees hum merrily. The yellow-winged parrots sing sweetly. The koels coo happily all day long. The pasturage of



Jhenjhanian looks lush and green. There is God's plenty here. We seek safety in your land. We seek refuge for a couple of years. Please help me to keep my people alive. Please ensure that our cattle survive. Thus spoke Kalu Khensi and King Dhandhal listened intently. King Dhandhal spoke generously, 'O Kalu, I welcome you to my land. Bring your herds of cattle in hundreds. Let them graze in the pasturage of Jhenjhanian. Let them quench their thirst at the Dipawali Tank. Your cows must not die. Your people must survive. Go back and bring them straight to my pasturage.' (*Khama!*)

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* King Dhandhal offered shelter to the distressed people of Jhayeria. Kalu Khensi was delighted. He departed happily. 'The Rathor has obliged me. Or else, my people would have died. But now life looks brighter. I'll lead hundreds of herds of cows to the green pasturage of Gadh Gujhanian. I'll graze them in the pasturage of Jhenjhanian and let them quench their thirst at the Dipawali Tank. Certainly, my people will survive.' May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Kalu journeyed homeward.
He journeyed homeward.
He set out for his homeland with hasty steps.

Kalu arrived at Jhayeria.
He arrived at Jhayeria.
He reached Jhayeria as fast as he could.

Kalu addressed his people,
He addressed his people,
'O chieftains! Listen to what I say.'

'O my sons, I implore you to listen to me.
I implore you to listen to me.
Listen to what I say.'

Jhendro and Mendro, the pair,
Jhendro and Mendro,



They were the sons of Kalu.

‘I have been to a place,
I have been to a place,
Where everything is in abundance.’

‘The place is blessed by God’s plenty.
The place is blessed by God’s plenty.
We shall migrate there.’

Kalu spoke with hope and enthusiasm.
He spoke with hope and enthusiasm.
‘O chieftains, listen to what I say.’

‘Gather the cattle.
Gather the cattle.
Gather your herds of cattle.’

‘Load your belongings on the bullocks.
Load your belongings on the bullocks.
We’ll set out immediately.’

People moved swiftly.
They moved swiftly.
They hurried to depart from their homeland.

The Khensis set forth on a journey.
They set forth on a journey.
Clouds of dust arose as they trod along.

The Khensis arrived at Gadh Gujhania.
They arrived at Gadh Gujhania.
They arrived at Gadh Gujhania.

Soon the pasturage of Jhenjhania was in sight.
The pasturage of Jhenjhania was in sight.
They settled in Jhenjhania.

On the outskirts of the town,



On the outskirts of the town,
They settled on the outskirts of the town.

Nature was in abundance.

Nature was in abundance.

They grazed their cattle and felt relief.

In the pasturage of Jhenjhanian,

In the pasturage of Jhenjhanian,

The Khensis grazed their cows in the pasturage of Jhenjhanian.

(*Tambur*)

Kalu Khensi rushed back to Jhayeria. He spoke to his chieftains, 'O brothers, we are struck by drought, but Gadh Gujhanian is blessed with God's plenty. The Rathors of Gadh Gujhanian will kindly take us in.' May you be well, O *honkaria*. Time flies by but the tale goes on.

Kalu Khensi stayed in Gadh Gujhanian for a year. The Khensis remained at the pasturage of Jhenjhanian until the month of Jeth set in. Jhayeria received good rains. Kalu decided to return to his land. He departed for his land with hundreds of cows. May you be well, O *honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

A *mali* of Gadh Gujhanian with not a *paisa* to his name,

A *mali* of Gadh Gujhanian with not a *paisa* to his name,

He sold fire-wood to eke out a living.

(*Tambur*) O *maharaj*! A *mali* of Gadh Gujhanian was penniless. He sold firewood to make a living. Once, he took a slender axe and *indhoni* and set off with his wife to collect fuel. He reached the jungle but fortune did not favour him that day. Soon night set in. The *mali* said to his wife, 'O *malan*, we have not gathered much fuel today and darkness has descended. What shall be our plight? We'll have to spend the night in the wilderness. We'll wake up before sunrise and gather plenty of fire-wood. That will fetch us some money. We'll buy grains of kodra and banti and appease our hunger. We'll not survive unless we eat. Although, tonight we are destined to sleep



hungry. But what about a spread-cloth? With what shall we cover ourselves?’ The malan took off her *odhani*. They spread it on the dusty ground. They managed to get some sleep. At about midnight, the mali had a dream. Shankar, the saviour of the poor, appeared before him.

(*Tambur*) Thus spoke God Shankar and the mali listened spell-bound, ‘O mali, the son of a farmer lives by tilling and toiling. But you sell fuel for your upkeep. You should rather till a farm. God will be with you. Grow *kevrā*, *marva*, *mogra*, *rai*, *tudnia*, *jhasi* and *jhavli*. Get a plot of land and a well on lease. Grow many flowering trees. God will be with you. But you should offer the first pick of flowers to me. The first blooms should adorn my feet. Then you may sell the rest to Dhandhal, the king. He’ll be pleased and will bestow you with abundant rewards. Fortune will smile upon you. You will eat, drink and prosper.’

The mali sprang on his feet. He woke his wife with delight. ‘O, malan, wake up and listen about the dream that I had. Mahadevji appeared before me. He asked me to till land. He has told me to plant trees. We’ll plant many trees in our garden.’ The malan said, ‘O, mali, don’t be influenced by such dreams. How can you have a vision of God in such wilderness? Why should he bless you so? Try to sleep peacefully. Hunger has affected your thoughts. We’ll be up early tomorrow and collect firewood in abundance. I’ll see that you don’t die of hunger. But please try to get some sleep now.’ However the mali tried, he could not sleep. Over and again, he had the same dream. Again, he woke his wife and told her about the fortunate future that lay ahead of them. Finally, the waking cock’s crowing heralded the day. The first streak of light brightened the sky. The mali and the malan sprang to their feet. The mali said, ‘O, malan, we won’t collect fuel any more. It’s better that we go home and get a plot of land on lease. We’ll have a well to water the plants. We’ll obtain various kinds of seeds and sow them. I’ll not sell firewood anymore.’

The mali and his wife returned to Gadh Gujhania. They got a plot of land on lease. The mali ploughed the land with the malan by his



side. She said, ‘O, mali, you’ve indeed started working. But from where do we get seeds and saplings? How can we grow a garden without any seeds?’ The mali said, ‘O malan, have faith in Mahadevji. No one will deny us anything. Go to the seed vendor and ask for seeds and saplings. Surely, he won’t turn you down. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The mali tilled the field. The malan went to get seeds. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The malan went to get seeds and saplings.

She went to get seeds and saplings.

She went to the marketplace.

The malan went to the seed vendor.

She went to the seed vendor.

The vendor’s shop she approached.

The malan spoke to the vendor.

She spoke to the vendor.

‘Listen to what I say, O brother.’

‘I want the seeds of *jhasi* and *jhavli*, O vendor.

I want the seeds of *jhasi* and *jhavli*.

Give me *mogra* and *marva* saplings.’

‘I need the saplings of *ketki* and *kevra*, O vendor.

I need the saplings of *ketki* and *kevra*.

Ketki and *kevra* saplings I need.’

(An accompanist: O brother! The lead singer: *Khama!*)

The vendor gave her the seeds and saplings.

He gave her the seeds and saplings.

He gave her the saplings of *marva* and *mogra*.

The malan collected seeds and saplings.

She collected seeds and saplings.

In a bundle she tied the seeds and saplings.



The malan turned to return home.
 She turned to return home.
 Homebound she turned, with the bundle of saplings and seeds.
 The mali prepared the flower beds.
 He prepared the flower beds.
 He sowed the seeds of jhasi and jhavli.
 (An accompanist: Is it so? The lead singer: Yes, it is so.)
 All the seeds and saplings he sowed.
 All the seeds and saplings he sowed.
 He planted them in the flower-beds.
 He drew water from the well.
 He drew water from the well.
 The mali drew water from the well.
 They watered the garden with great care.
 They watered the garden with great care.
 They watered the garden everyday.
 The seeds sprouted in a few days.
 The seeds sprouted in a few days.
 They grew into healthy little plants.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The mali drew water from the well. He sowed the seeds and weeded the farm. *(Jeevta!)* *(Tambur)* The mali made furrows in the field and the malan watered the flower-beds. Day and night they toiled. As the days passed, the seeds began to sprout. They grew into healthy little plants. They rose ankle high. In no time they grew waist high. *Khama!* *(Tambur)* They grew day and night. *O maharaj!* They grew into tall flowering plants. They bloomed with numerous flowers. *O maharaj!* Black-winged drones buzzed around. Yellow-winged parrots murmured merrily and the koels cooed all day long. The garden burst in to full bloom. The branches were laden with



blossoms. Whiff of sweet fragrance lingered in the air. The mali and malan lived happily. Their hard toil had given fruit. The malan thought of picking the flowers. With great care she wove a garland. She offered the garland to the king and sold the flowers in the market. The mali and malan forgot to offer the first picks to Mahadevji.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be very auspicious. Mahadevji pondered for a while, ‘One should never pity a pauper. When he is in need, he’ll sing in your praises. He will weep and whine and shed bitter tears. He’ll beg you when in necessity. But once his need is served, you’ll be conveniently ignored.’

O maharaj! How could the mali and the malan have forgotten the God? They collected the flowers and made garlands for the king and the courtiers. Mahadevji pondered for awhile, ‘O mali, see how I turn the tables on you. You were in rags, I made you rich. But you did not care to offer me a handful of flowers. I will now exact my tribute from you.’ Mahadevji was annoyed. He took the form of a huge wild boar. He came to the glistening green garden. He razed the garden, turning it into ruins. He trampled the champa and kevra plants. He uprooted the trees. The roots went skywards and the boughs kissed the earth. A single champa tree stood alone. Mahadevji dug a burrow under its trunk. He crept inside the burrow and fell asleep. The garden was razed to the ground. All that had stood was leveled to the ground.

Sometime before the break of dawn, the malan stretched herself in bed. As morning dawned, she adorned herself. She put on a skirt and tied her hair with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that went well with the skirt and picked a necklace that suited her best. She applied streaks of black *kohl* to her eyes and dotted her forehead with a red mark. A ring adorned her nose. Daintily dressed, she was in high spirit. Pearls sparkled in her hair locks. She was clad in a sari that suited her beautifully. Her pretty anklets jingled as she walked. She was in full pomp and splendour. She took a golden basket and a silver hook. She placed an indhoni made of marva stalks on her head and a



golden basket above it. In her gorgeous attire, she moved with a graceful gait, her anklets making a jingling sound. She took the path to the glistening green garden. Her flowing strides seemed to reach out, as if she was walking across the earth. Her skin, a deep golden hue, shone like fresh flowers in bloom. The biting eastern wind swept across her delicate face. She was in the flower of her youth. She took the way to the glistening green garden. *Khama!*

(Tambur)

She trod along the road to her garden. She paused and looked around. Her glistening green garden was razed to the ground. The trees were uprooted. Neither flowers nor plants were in sight. The malan stood dumbstruck. ‘Someone else’s garden this must be,’ she pondered for a while. She circled the garden with halting steps. The fence was familiar, the garden was the same. ‘This is our garden, no doubt. But am I dreaming?’ She skimmed the scene over and again. She beat her breasts in despair. ‘Alas! This is my garden all right, but I am doomed. A beast has wrecked it completely.’ She stooped to have a closer look. She traced the marks of the hoofs. They dug deep into the soil. In despair, she beat her breasts. She wept and whined, wailed and whimpered. She cursed the animal. *(Tambur)* ‘O, evil beast! May you be confined to hell. You have razed my glistening green garden. Alas! Why am I alive?’ She wailed aloud and damned the beast. The boar watched from his burrow. ‘O woman! You dare to curse me from a distance! Budge an inch closer and see what would be your plight.’ As she stepped nearer, the boar leapt to its feet. He charged forth at her and flung her down. The malan was hurled in the air. The malan landed on her head. *Khama! (Bhalai!)*

(Tambur) *O maharaj!* The malan could not collect herself for some time. Tears trickled down her cheeks in fearful plight. The boar crept back into the burrow. Lying sideways, the malan wailed. After a while, rolling on her side, she struggled to her feet. She got up, unmindful of her golden basket and the silver hook. With her skirt curling up, she took unsteady flight. She wept and whined, wailed and whimpered. She tore the way to Gadh Gujhania. *O maharaj!*



Dhandhal, the king, was seated in his assembly. Courtly matters were being discussed. The hookahs were filled with the best hemp. Opium-drinks were being served generously. The malan darted directly towards the court. She arrived at the court of Dhandhal, the king. She slumped down crestfallen.

The malan slumped down on the ground.
 She slumped down on the ground.
 She fell as she entered the court.

She wept and wailed.
 She wept and wailed.
 She beat her breasts.

‘O king and the courtiers,’ said she.
 ‘O king and the courtiers,
 Listen to what I say.’

‘My throat is parched.
 My throat is parched.
 My speech is failing me.’

The malan was distressed.
 She was distressed.
 Agony pierced her heart.

Water was offered to her.
 She was offered water.
 The courtiers offered her a glass of water.

‘Tell us the tale of your distress.
 Tell us the tale of your distress.
 Who has beaten and battered you?’

The malan cried her eyes out.
 She cried her eyes out.
 She narrated her tale of agony with loud laments.

‘Listen to what I say.



Listen to what I say.

Lend me your ears, O king.'

'Henceforth, only a wreath of *aak* flowers, O king,
Only a wreath of *aak* flowers,
Will adorn your neck.'

'My glistening green garden is ravaged, O king.
My glistening green garden is ravaged.
The champa and kevra trees are destroyed.'

The malan wept and wailed.
She wept and wailed.
Lamenting loudly, she narrated her tale of agony.

'A boar has stalked in.
He has stalked in.
He has ruined the glistening green garden.'

The king said to his chieftains,
He said to his chieftains,
'O chieftains, listen to what I say.'

'Sharpen the blades of your swords, O brothers.
Sharpen the blades of your swords.
It's time to sharpen your weapons.'

Jeevta! Bhalai!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The malan said to the king, 'O king, henceforth only a wreath of *aak* flowers will adorn your neck. Neither flowers nor flower beds remain in our garden. A beast has stalked in. The glistening green garden is ravaged. All my champa and kevra trees lie trampled. Only one tree stands on the ground. A vicious beast has dug a burrow beneath its trunk. He rests within. O, what an animal! I've never seen a tail so short and a muzzle so huge! He attacked me and flung me in the air.'



The king said to his chieftains, 'O my brave warriors, do not delay. It's time to brace yourselves. The timid ones will turn their backs but the valiant ones will fight fiercely. Let our valour be put to test. Hurry up and sharpen the blades of your swords. We'll mount an attack on this boar.' As the king spoke, all his storekeepers and clerks, the traders and millers, sprang to their feet. They raced to their houses. They held aloft their swords and guns. The best guns from the land of Bundikot were brought in. They held high their fiery spears. Hurriedly, they returned to court.

The king spoke to the horse-keeper, 'Hurry up! There is no time for delay. Fasten the saddle on my horse. Tighten the stirrups.' The horse-keeper quickly tightened the stirrups. He fastened a long loose rein to the bridle. He led the horse to Manek Chawk. (*Khama!*) (*Tambur*) The horse was led to Manek Chawk. The king held high his gun from Bundikot. He picked his shield and sword. He raised aloft his fiery spear. He arrived quickly and took the rein in his hands. In one swift movement, he mounted his horse. 'O my brave chieftains, listen to me. Listen intently. Let not the beast escape. However, I alone will venture close to the boar. No gun should be aimed and shot. I'll kill the beast. My queen and children will savour its sumptuous meat. Only then will I be called Dhandhal, the king, the sovereign of Gadh Gujhanian. Otherwise, I'll never again set foot in my kingdom,' he said. Thus Dhandhal, the king, took a vow, advised his men and rode away. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. *Khama! Bhalai!*

Dhandhal, the king, besieged the beast.

He besieged the beast.

The king besieged the beast.

The chieftains ranged around.

They ranged around.

The chieftains ranged around the beast.

The king cantered on his horse.

He cantered on his horse.



He charged forward, holding his sword.

The boar emerged from the burrow.

He emerged from the burrow.

The proud beast stalked out.

The boar started sporting around.

He started sporting around.

The huge beast sported around.

The king charged forth with his spear drawn.

He charged forth with his spear drawn.

The boar stood before him.

Nearing his prey, the king brandished his gun.

Nearing his prey, the king brandished his gun.

The boar stood straight in line of the gun.

(An accompanist: O king! The lead singer: You said it well!)

The boar sported around.

He sported around.

The huge beast circled around.

The boar dashed at the king.

He dashed at the king.

In a headlong rush, the boar toppled the king.

The king fell off his horse.

He fell off his horse.

His chieftains watched him plummeting.

The boar made off into the jungle.

It made off into the jungle.

It fled into the dense forest.

The king rose to his feet.

He rose to his feet.

His sword and gun, he collected with speed.



(Tambur) *O maharaj!*

The entire town swarmed out. Grabbing their weapons, the people rushed to get to the boar. People thronged the path to the glistening green garden. *O maharaj!* They surrounded the glistening green garden. They started closing in. The king ventured closer. He cantered on his horse. *O maharaj!* The boar watched from his burrow. It pondered, 'Budge an inch closer and see your plight. Fire your gun and see who falls, you'll be the loser, not me, who is God.' The chieftains were watching from a distance. 'Now our king will kill the beast. We'll have a sumptuous feast,' they thought. They waited eagerly for the king to attack the beast. The boar emerged from the burrow. He started sporting around. He circled the horse. The king weighed his spear. But the beast swiftly moved away. The king brandished his gun. He aimed at the boar and fired a shot. For a moment, the boar would be close enough for the king to use a spear, the next moment it would move away, forcing the king to aim his gun. The boar played around with the king for some time. He played about in the glistening green garden. He lingered for some time and then in a headlong rush, he pushed itself between the legs of the horse. Together, the horse and the king tumbled. The horse landed on its back and the king plummeted at further distance. His gun and spear were flung away. The boar fled into the jungle.

The king sprang to his feet and gathered his weapons. He held the reins of his horse and mounted it in a single leap. He said to his chieftains, 'Go back home. Your families must be waiting for you. I'll go on alone, no one should follow me. I pledge that I won't return without claiming my prey. I bid you farewell until then. If I stay alive, I'll return to Gadh Gujhania.' The king jolted his horse into a run. He followed on the heels of the boar. Pursuing alongside, they reached a dense forest. The beast sped from one hill to another. The king was impatient to catch up with him. He closely followed him. But his horse felt tired and was dying of fatigue. It was hungry and thirsty, and foaming at the mouth. But the king kept cracking the whip harder than ever. The exhausted horse doubled up each



time. On and away they ran, from hillock to hillock, and further. As they passed the fourth hillock, the horse became weary and strained. Shivji, in the guise of a boar, pondered, 'The king has been whipping the poor horse hard. He has lost his senses. The king seems haughty and headstrong. The horse will be worn to death.' 'O Almighty,' he said, 'I summon you to send me a peacock from your heavenly abode. I'll step on its feathers, leaving no trace. Otherwise, the king will continue to pursue me and wear his horse to death.' Instantly, a peacock appeared before the boar. It spread its feathers before him. The boar stepped onto the feathers, leaving behind neither sign nor trail. The boar was soon out of sight. He disappeared inside a nearby shrine. The hoof-shaped marks we see on the feathers of a peacock, are those made by the boar. Mahadevji took the form of a boar and stepped over the feathers of a peacock. Since then the peacock bears hoof-shaped marks on its feathers. Soon the king arrived. He strained his eyes. He looked for the boar's trail in vain. 'Where must have the beast gone?' He could not trace the boar. He searched in every nook and gap. He had missed the trail of his prey.

He rode on and on until he saw a huge banyan tree. He led his horse towards the tree. He dismounted the horse and tied it to the tree. Against its trunk, he propped his gun. He leaned against the tree to rest. He pondered for a while, 'The boar must have gone into hiding. But I'll trace him by following his trail.' He stood up again to find the marks. Suddenly, Shivji's shrine was in sight. The king entered the shrine. He felt tranquil and serene. He sat down to worship. He offered *bilva patra* to God. He became unmindful of his horse and oblivious of his gun. The horse died of thirst and hunger. And the gun was devoured by the white ants. O God, glory be to you! None cared either for the horse or the gun. The king was deeply engrossed in worship of Lord Shankar. He had whipped his horse for two and twenty kilometers. But then he forgot all about the horse. The horse perished and the gun was gobbled up by ants. Days rolled into months and the months turned into years. Thus twelve years passed by. The king pondered for a while, 'I won't budge from here until



Lord Shankar appears before me.'

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The king sat undeterred. He waited for twelve long years. 'Lord Shankar will speak to me one day,' thought the king. Shivji thought, 'The king chased me for thirty-six thousand miles¹⁴ when I had assumed the form of a boar. And now he thinks that I'll speak to him! Nay, I will not. He was laced with flowers that were meant to be given to me. Wait and watch, I'll bring him to his senses. He has chased me for miles upon miles. Today, I've brought him at my feet.'

One fine day,
One fine day,
An incident occurred one fine day.

A *kir*, dark and black-skinned,
A kir, dark and black-skinned,
Set out to fish.

He went to catch fish at the river.
He went to catch fish at the river.
He went fishing to the river.

He caught fish in great numbers.
He caught fish in great numbers.
Heaps of fish he caught.

He filled a basket with his catch.
He filled a basket with his catch.
The kir gathered the fish in his basket.

The kir carried the basket on his head.
He carried the basket on his head.
He set off with the load of fish.

He went along the path to the shrine.
He went along the path to the shrine.
He arrived at Shivji's shrine.



He poured out the fish.
 He poured out the fish.
 He poured out the fish at Shivji's shrine.
 He worshipped God with a load of fish.
 He worshipped God with a load of fish.
 He offered the fish to Shivji.

(An accompanist: O, he littered the shrine with fish. The lead singer: You said it well!)

The kir emptied his basket.
 He emptied his basket.
 He grabbed a handful of fish.
 The kir mashed and minced them over the idol.
 He mashed and minced them over the idol.
 He pounded them into small pieces.
 He offered the shredded bits to Shivji.
 He offered the shredded bits to Shivji.
 'I offer you what I get to eat,' said he.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Dhandhal, the king, was engrossed in worship of God Shivji. One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be auspicious. A dark-skinned kir arrived at the shrine. With a slender axe in hand, he went to the hillock. He chipped the bark of a tree. He loaded the chips into his basket and went to the riverbank. He caught fish with the wooden chips. The kir caught a shoal of fish, of all shapes and sizes. He filled the fish in his basket and headed homeward. Suddenly, Shivji's shrine came to sight. As he neared the shrine the kir thought, 'It's Shivji's shrine. I should seek his blessings, lest God become displeased. If that happens I'll not be able to catch such a shoal of fish again.' The kir lowered his basket. He heaved out the fish in both hands. He went into the shrine. King Dhandhal watched him in silence. The kir poured the fish over the idol. With a length of



wood, he mashed the fish into small pieces. ‘O Mahadevji, I offer you what I eat. Whatever is provided to me, I give back to you. I present you my catch,’ thus he spoke. As he poured the fish onto the idol, Shivji got annoyed.

(*Tambur*) O maharaj! Shivji appeared before him. He spoke to the black-skinned kir, ‘O kir, I’ll fulfill all your wishes. May you multiply and have as many sons as the number of fish you’ve offered me. May you eat, drink and prosper ever after.’ The king was amazed. God had ignored him for many years. But he had showered bountiful blessings on the kir for no apparent reason. Dhandhal, the king, said aloud, ‘How surprising! I abstained from food and water. I sat by the sacred fire day and night. I offered mounds of bilva leaves. Still you ignored me. And look at that kir. He committed a sin. He desecrated and defiled your idol with blood. And yet you blessed him with offsprings. Pray, what is my offence? Why don’t you speak to me? O Shivji, if you desire a sacrifice, I’ll readily comply. Why are you displeased with me? I cannot endure your silence anymore.’ The king was annoyed. He was determined to end his life. *Khama! Khama!* (*Tambur*)

The king put the dagger at his throat.

He put the dagger at his throat.

He drew his dagger.

‘I’ll offer you my head, O Shivji.

I’ll offer you my head.’

He brought the dagger down his throat.

‘I’ll desecrate your shrine, O Shivji.

I’ll desecrate your shrine.

I’ll defile it with my blood.’

The king was about to slash his throat.

He was about to slash his throat.

He placed the dagger on his throat.

Shivji held his hand.



He held his hand.

Shivji held the king's hand.

Shivji spoke to the king.

He spoke to the king.

'O king, listen to what I say.'

'You need not end your life, O king.

You need not end your life.

I'll grant you a kingdom.'

(An accompanist: Now, who'll die? The lead singer: Listen!)

'Let me end my life, O Shivji.

Let me end my life.

I do not wish to live,' said the king.

'Ask for anything that you wish,' said the God.

'Ask for anything that you wish.

I'll fulfill your heart's desire.'

'Pledge in the name of Truth, O God,' said the king.

'Pledge in the name of Truth.

Promise me that you'll be true to your words.'

Shivji gave his word to the king.

He gave his word to the king.

He pledged solemnly.

The king spoke to Shivji.

He spoke to Shivji.

'O God, listen to what I say.'

'I want a bride, O Shivji.

I want a bride.

I want to marry a beautiful dame.'

Shivji thought hard.

He thought hard.



‘O king, you’ve done ill in the world.’

‘I haven’t got a daughter, O king.

I haven’t got a daughter.

Whose daughter should I get for you?’

‘Ask for gold, solid and pure, O king.

Ask for gold, solid and pure.

Elephants and horses, I’ll grant you.’

(An accompanist: No, I want only a bride. The lead singer: O look at him!)

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Shivji disappeared after talking to the dark-skinned kir. The king felt annoyed. ‘This is disgusting. Why do I not end my life? O Shivji, I think you desire a sacrifice. I’ll offer you my head. I’ll quench your thirst with my blood. You’ll be blamed for my death, but why should I worry?’ The king brought the dagger to his throat. *O maharaj!* Before the dagger caused harm, Shivji appeared. He stopped the king. But the king refused to listen to him. ‘O king, I’ll fulfill all your wishes,’ the God said. The king replied, ‘I want nothing, and I will not stop.’ ‘Listen to me. Don’t defile my shrine,’ Shivji stopped him by holding his hand. The king asked, ‘Who are you to hold me by my hand?’ ‘I am Shivji, I’m God.’ ‘O, are you Shivji?’ asked the king with disdain. ‘Yes, I’m Shivji. Have no doubts. I’ll grant all your wishes. I do not want you to die.’ ‘If you are God, then give me your word before I express my wish,’ said Dhandhal, the king. *Khama!*

(An accompanist claps the palm of the lead singer, pretending to promise.)

‘Now that you have promised, I won’t die. But please get me a bride. I would like to return home with a wife.’ ‘O king, I haven’t any daughter. Nor do I have a niece. Whose daughter should I seek for you? How shall I get you a bride? Ask for something else instead. I’ll shower upon you heaps of gold. I’ll give you elephants, horses,



and a big army. I can fulfill any such wishes but from where shall I get you a bride?’ said Shivji. ‘O Lord, I wish for nothing else. Admit that you wish to go back on your pledge. Acknowledge that you are unable to keep a promise given in earnest, and I’ll return to my land.’ ‘He seems to be annoyed,’ thought Shivji. ‘But from where shall I get him a bride?’ the God pondered for a while, ‘Listen, O king, Listen to me intently. You’ll find a lake nearby. Go there and dig a pit. Prepare a hideout and quickly come back here. I’ll then tell you what you should do next.’

(*Tambur*) O maharaj! The king went to the lake. He dug a pit and created a hiding place. He swiftly returned and said, ‘O Shivji, I’ve dug a pit. What should I do now?’ Shivji said, ‘O king, the *apsaras* will come down for a swim in the lake. They’ll come to have a dip. They’ll slip out of their clothes before entering the water. Watch intently to get a chance and crawl to get to their heap of clothes. Grab them all and run to my shrine. Once you reach here, they won’t be able to harm you. But if you’re caught on your way, they will surely devour you. I won’t be able to save you then.’ The king pondered for a while, ‘I am being put in bit of a spot. If the *apsaras* seize me, they’ll eat me alive. But come what may!’ And the king went to the lake. He waited in the hideaway.

The king crept inside the pit.

He crept inside the pit.

He sneaked inside the dugout.

The king sat inside the hiding place.

He sat inside the hiding place.

He sat there attentively.

Heaven was bustling with activity.

It was bustling.

A flurry of activities was going on.

The *apsaras* slid along the heavenly wind.

They slid along the heavenly wind.



O look, how they glide!

They landed on the banks of the lake.

They landed on the banks of the lake.

They came down to the lake for a dip.

The apsaras cast off their garments.

They cast off their garments.

They entered the water without a stitch on.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The king sat in hiding. Holding his breath, he sat without stirring a limb. After a while, at midday, heaven became active. The apsaras took wings. They slid in the form of large beautiful birds. And in no time they landed beside the lake. The king was astounded. What a beautiful spectacle! *O maharaj!* As soon as their feet touched the ground, the apsaras turned into beautiful damsels. *(Tambur)* They took off their clothes and merrily entered the lake. The apsaras frolicked in the water. They started playing the game of *sirkaliya*. Assuming forms of various birds, they played.

An alert and agile king sat still. He pondered for a while, 'The dames are engrossed in water sports. I should take my chance. But what if they spot me? And if they catch me, they'd devour me, no doubt.' The king sneaked out stealthily. Crawling on his arms, he advanced towards the spot where the apsaras had left their clothes. He came to the heap of garments. Keeping close to the ground, he grabbed their clothes. Then he started to crawl back. Creeping backwards, he covered a vast ground. Then he rose to his feet, turned around and began to run swiftly. He raced to Shivji's shrine. Shivji said, 'O king, pile these clothes in a corner.' Then he clapped and turned the king into a waxen fly. He stuck the fly on the ceiling of the shrine.

In the meantime, the apsaras realised the loss of their clothes. Hirapath, their leader, said, 'Look, you strumpets, we have been robbed. Someone has stolen our clothes. Come, move swiftly. We must catch the thief.' And undraped and bare, they emerged from



the lake and looked around helplessly. They stooped to trace the footmarks. The thief had left clear signs. They ran along the trail. They came to Shivji's shrine and encircled it. Shivji, the God with matted hair, watched them come. He said, 'O apsaras, why have you come to my shrine in such a hustle? And that too, without a stitch on yourselves?' The apsaras tried to cover their shame with their hands. They said, 'O Shivji, You've done ill in this world. Hand over our thief.' 'There isn't any thief around, O apsaras,' the God said. 'Don't lie to us, O God,' said the heavenly maids, 'The thief is hiding in your shrine. If this is not so, then it is you who has done the mischief. If none else has committed the crime, then you are responsible for it. Admit that you are the thief or hand us the real offender.' God denied the charge. But the apsaras would not listen. They kept nagging him. Shivji gave in and said, 'O apsaras, give me your word that you'll do as I say. Only then will I hand over your culprit.' Shivji coerced a promise from the heavenly damsels. 'Here's your culprit. You must forgive his crime. I've promised him a bride. He'll choose his mate from among you and you shouldn't refuse him. We'll arrange for a wedding amidst the wilderness. The fortunate among you will get the king as her bridegroom.'

What could the apsaras say? They were in distress. They had pledged. They desperately wanted their clothes back. (The singer laughs.) God handed them their clothes. The apsaras draped themselves and said to the Lord, 'O Shivji, you've placed us in a difficult situation. We are bound by our words. There is no way out for us. We are in a real muddle.' Shivji said, 'If you are bound by your words, I, too, stand pledged to someone. My words should not turn out to be untrue. In any case, you'll have to marry someone in the coming days. I've found you a groom. There is no need to sulk.' (The audience laughs.)

The apsaras pondered for a while. They went behind the shrine. They changed their appearance. The prettiest ones turned into the ugliest and the ugly ones became the prettiest. The old ones wore a youthful guile and the young ones seemed old. Some were festering,



and a few smiled through crooked teeth. Some had very large ears and some looked ghastly. The fair ones looked deceptively dark. They wore shabby, scruffy and ghastly looks. And the older ones turned into beautiful young damsels. They all queued up. Shivji advised the king, 'O king, do exactly as I say. Don't fall for a pretty dame. The one, chosen by you, would be your bride. You must not select a pretty maiden, for she'd turn out to be the ugliest. But if you go for the ugliest of them all, the fairest you'll get.' (The audience laughs.) Thus the Lord advised.

The apsaras came in a row and the king stood facing them. He looked at them in turns. 'Who'd go for an ugly damsel when there are several pretty faces around?' The king pondered for a while. As he was about to reach out for a beautiful dame, Shivji took the form of a mosquito and buzzed in his ear. As the king tried to touch the girl, the mosquito went deeper into his ear. The king withdrew his hand to pull the insect out. He went past the pretty girl. On several occasions, he had to withdraw his hand. At last, the king stood before the ugliest dame. A set of such crooked teeth! A pair of such large ears! Oh, how disgusting!" he thought.

She was so ugly.

She was so ugly.

Yet the king held her hand.

The king pondered for a while.

He pondered for a while.

'O I hope that I'm not cheated!"

(An accompanist: O, he has rejected the fair maiden to choose an ugly one! The lead singer: Yes, it's true.)

'We are robbed, O friends,' cried the apsaras.

'We are robbed.

The crown of our group has been taken away.'

(An accompanist: Twelve years have passed. The lead singer: Yes, it' so.)



'You've done ill in the world, O, Shivji,' said they.

'You've done ill in the world.

You have been untrue to us.'

Shivji said to the apsaras,

He said to the apsaras,

'Listen to what I say, O apsaras.'

'It is all written in our fate, O apsaras.

It is all written in our fate.

No one can alter the decree of fate.'

The nuptial was arranged at night.

It was arranged at night.

It was arranged at Shivji's shrine.

Shivji arranged for the king's wedding.

He arranged for the king's wedding.

He arranged for him to get married at night.

The apsara circled the altar.

She circled the altar.

The bride circled the sacred fire.

Hirapath stopped while circling the fire.

She stopped while circling the fire.

She stopped abruptly.

'The hour of giving gifts has come,' said she.

'The hour of giving gifts has come.'

She stopped while circling the fire.

(Tambur)

The apsaras wept and wailed, 'O Shivji, You've done ill in the world. We are robbed. The best among us has been taken away. We all are pretty but Hirapath's beauty is matchless. We are dispossessed of our beauty!' 'O apsaras,' Shivji said, 'I should not be blamed. It is a decree of fate. Good conduct leads to good results. Her good deeds



are being rewarded. She gets to marry a worthy man, why do you blame me? Do not weep and wail. Let us celebrate. We will arrange the wedding in the wilderness. The king and the apsara will be joined in wedlock.'

O maharaj! Look at these women! While one eye smiles, their other eye sheds tears of grief! The moment the word 'wedding' was heard, the women became festive. They sang marriage songs. Some of the apsaras joined the groom and the others sided with the bride. They sang auspicious songs. They aimed banter at one another. The king came to honour the *toran*. He struck the toran and entered the wedding-pavilion. The bride and the groom started going around the sacred fire. Suddenly Hirapath stopped. 'O friends, grant me a wish, I ask for my dowry. You damned wenches! Have you wondered that while you'd always be together, I am to be separated from you and shall feel lonely? Who'd take care of me? Who'd think of my plight?' 'O Hirapath, don't grieve over your plight. Name your dowry. We promise to fulfill all your wishes,' said the apsaras. 'Give me a pair of jingling anklets. Only then will I complete my marriage rites,' said she, 'O friends, try to understand my predicament. We have always lived together but now I part from you. You've arranged for my nuptials in a forest. You do not know from where this king has come. We know nothing about his kith and kin. We know not about his wealth or assets. My nuptials have taken place in this wilderness and soon you will fly back. I'll be left behind. Where does this king live? May be here in this shrine? Or at some other unknown place? Where is his home and house? Where will he take me? Where will we eat and drink? Under what kind of roof shall we sleep? What will be my condition, O friends? Grant me a wish. Promise me that if I'm ever in need, you'll come down to help me.'

The apsaras said, 'O Hirapath, here is a pair of jingling anklets. If ever you are in trouble, offer it a whiff of gugal *dhup* and jingle them for a while. As soon as the sound reaches our dwelling, Ambavadi, we will all rush down to your aid. All of us, nine lacs in all, will come to your assistance. Please don't shed tears of grief. Have faith in us



and banish your fears.’ Hirapath completed the last circle around the altar. With heavy hearts, the apsaras departed for their abode in Ambavadi. Shivji said to the king, ‘O king, it is time for you to return to your land. Take good care of your bride. Do not ever ill-treat her. Look after her well-being. You’ve been here for twelve long years.’

‘Why had you come here, O king?’ asked Shivji.

‘Why had you come?’

Tell me your reason for undertaking this journey.’

‘I came here chasing a boar, O Shivji,’ said the king.

‘I came here chasing a boar.

I came because of a wild boar.’

‘The boar gave me a slip, O Shivji.

He gave me a slip.

I came here chasing him.’

The king remembered his horse.

He remembered his horse.

‘O Shivji! I had tied my horse yonder.’

The king raced to the banyan tree.

He raced to the banyan tree.

He saw the remains of his horse.

The king remembered his long-forsaken gun.

He thought of his long-forsaken gun.

‘I had left my gun somewhere here,’ mused he.

The king saw the barrel of his gun.

He saw the barrel of his gun.

‘I must have left it here,’ thought he.

‘Collect the remains of your horse, O king.

Collect the remains of your horse.

Collect the bones of the horse,’ said Shivji.



The king gathered the bones.
 He gathered the bones.
 Shivji sprinkled drops of nectar over the bones.
 The horse came to life.
 The horse came to life.
 Revat, the black horse, revived.
 The gun too became new.
 It appeared new.
 It was all anew.
 The king picked up his gun.
 He picked up his gun.
 He ran his hand over it.
 ‘Behold, O king! Here comes the boar.
 Here comes the boar,’
 Said Shivji, his hair matted.
 ‘The boar is coming this way, O king.
 He is coming this way.
 Shoot at him as he comes.’
 The king shot his gun.
 He shot his gun.
 He killed the boar in a single shot.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Shivji, Dhandhal and Hirapath sat together at the shrine. Shivji said, ‘O woman, don’t look so disheartened. You have married a worthy man. He has a royal lineage. You are fortunate to have a king as your mate. He belongs to a noble clan. He is the sovereign of a large kingdom. He is a wealthy man. He has a large army. He is the king of Gadh Gujhanian. O woman, he rules over Gadh Gujhanian. You won’t suffer want in his house. Go with him. May you be happy forever and rule over the vast land.’ Then he turned to the king, ‘O



king, you have been here for twelve long years. You have worshipped me with great devotion. But why had you come here?’ ‘I had come chasing a wild boar,’ the king said. ‘He had ruined my glistening green garden. I came here on his trail. But he outwitted me.’ And the king thought of his horse. He remembered his gun. Shivji said, ‘Come, show me the place where you had rested. Where did you go?’ They went to the banyan tree. The king said, ‘O Shivji, I had tied my horse here. These are his remains. And there I had placed my gun. See, that’s the barrel of my gun. There it lies, half-eaten by termites.’

(*Tambur*) O maharaj! Thus spoke Shivji, ‘Collect the bones of your horse.’ The king gathered every piece of bone. Shivji sprinkled drops of nectar over them and touched them with a *kaniyor* twig. Suddenly, the horse sprang to life. Revat, the black horse, stood neighing. Shaking his body, he stood upright under the banyan tree. O maharaj! The king looked at his gun. What did he see? The gun was shining, reflecting the sun rays. The king was dazzled. *Khama! Khama!* (*Tambur*) The horse, in all his adornments, stood neighing and the gun looked all new! The king leapt and picked his gun. He ran his hand all over it. ‘No doubt, this is my gun. The horse is also mine. The same are his harness and the rein.’ Shivji asked, ‘In which direction had the boar gone off?’ ‘He went yonder,’ said the king. And as the king spoke and pointed the direction, there emerged the boar. ‘Look, the boar is heading this way,’ said Shivji. ‘As he arrives, shoot him down.’ The king aimed his gun. The boar fell and lay dead on the ground. Shivji said, ‘O king, you may now take your bride to your kingdom. You’ve accomplished your pledge. You are not bound by your words anymore. You must take good care of your bride.’

The king and his queen mounted the horse. The carcass of the boar was laid on the horse’s back. The king took the rein in his hand. He jolted the horse into a run. Soon the king was on his way to Gadh Gujhanian. The forest was left behind. They reached the outskirts of Gadh Gujhanian. The king halted his horse. He said, ‘O queen! Look, this is my land, this is our kingdom.’ The queen stepped aside.



She pondered for a while, ‘O king, how many queens have you?’
 ‘One. So far, I had only one queen. But now that I have wedded you, I have two. Twelve years have passed by. I don’t know whether my first queen is still alive.’ The queen turned aside and said, ‘I won’t come to your palace.’

‘I won’t go to the palace your first queen, O king.
 I won’t go to the palace your first queen.
 I’ll not step inside her dwelling,’ said the apsara.

‘She would jeer at me, O king.
 She would jeer at me.
 She’ll make my life miserable.’

‘Get a new palace built for me, O king.
 Get a new palace built for me.
 A new bride should have a new palace.’

(An accompanist: I won’t come to the old palace! The lead singer: Yes, it’s so.)

The bride stopped at the outskirts.
 She stopped at the outskirts.
 She refused to accompany the king to his palace.

The king said to her,
 He said to her,
 ‘Listen to what I say, O queen.’

‘A seven-storeyed palace, O queen,
 A seven-storeyed palace,
 I’ll take you to a seven-storeyed palace.’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The king said, ‘I’ll take you to a palace with seven storeys. I’ll employ many maids in your service. You’ll eat, drink and prosper ever after in the palace of clouds. I’ll arrange for a golden vessel to heat water for you to bathe. You can amble around in the glistening green



garden. There is no dearth of anything in my cloud-capped palace. The maids will heat water and help you to have your bath. I'll keep you in luxury.' 'O king, I would willingly come but I fear the banter of the other queen. No, I won't accompany you to your palace. A new queen deserves a new palace.' The king pondered for a while, 'She's newly wed. How can I deny her a wish? But look how she takes offence! She is so obstinate!' They argued until nightfall. The queen sat firm. Darkness deepened at the outskirts of the kingdom. *Khama!*

Darkness descended on the outskirts.

Darkness descended on the outskirts.

The day came to an end.

The queen sat up until late.

She sat up until late.

She kept awake until midnight.

The queen offered gugal to the sacred fire.

She offered gugal to the sacred fire.

Gugal incense she offered.

The queen jingled the anklets.

She jingled the anklets.

The whiff of gugal incense infused the air.

Nine lac apsaras,

Nine lac apsaras,

Nine lac apsaras at Ambavadi were alerted.

(An accompanist: They must have heard the sound. The lead singer: Yes, it is true.)

The jingling sound reached heaven.

The jingling sound reached heaven.

Amba, the apsara, spoke aloud.

'Listen to what I say, O folks.



Listen to what I say.
 Let me speak what is on my mind.'
 'Hirapath seems to be in distress.
 She seems to be in distress.
 She has remembered us at this hour of the night.'
 'We've left her behind, O folks.
 We've left her behind.
 She's jingling the anklet to call us.'
 Heaven was on bustle.
 Heaven was on bustle.
 It was in a flurry of activities.
 Nine lac apsaras became active and agile.
 Nine lac apsaras became active and agile.
 They set off to help Hirapath.
Jeevta! Bhalai! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Hirapath offered gugal to the sacred fire. She took out the pair of anklets and shook them. The jingling sound reached Ambavadi. Amba rebuked her companions, 'O friends, how can you sleep at this hour? We are doomed, O wenches! We all are together here, but our friend is left alone on earth. She seems to be in distress. What could be ailing her at this hour? Be quick, you lazy wenches, move swiftly. We should leave at once and find the reason of her distress.' *O maharaj!* Thus spoke Amba. All the apsaras became alert. Heaven was in commotion. Assuming the form of birds bearing long beaks and large wings, the apsaras left their dwelling. *Khama!*

(Tambur) O maharaj! They set off to ensure their friend's well-being. They arrived at the outskirts of Gadh Gujhanian. They slid down, one after the other, nine lacs in all. *Khama!* *(Tambur)* 'O Friend, tell us the tale of your grief. What ails you so?' Hirapath replied, 'You all live together. As one hands over one's pet dog to an acquaintance,



you've handed me over to a stranger. I do not know anything about the king's home and house. He wants to take me to the palace of his first wife. She would jeer at me. I don't want to go there. Build a new palace for me, here and now.' Amba replied, 'Is that all you ask for? We'll build you a palace in the blink of an eye. Before the day breaks, you'll have a new palace. Don't be so annoyed.'

O maharaj! The nine lac apsaras toiled hard for the sake of their friend. They built a seven-storeyed palace within no time. *Khama! Khama!* (*Tambur*) A seven-storeyed palace was built. It was painted yellow and green. They painted it with colours so bright! And they equipped it with the best swings and many other beautiful articles. Everything was in plenty. Hirapath said, 'O friends, you've built a palace for me. But from where would I fetch water? Please dig a small well for me. And where would I go for a swim? Surely, I need a little pond.' *O maharaj!* She called for one and fifteen apsaras made a beeline for her! They worked with much ardour, one and all. O Lord! If their friend had asked, they would have dug an area even as large as a town. They dug a large pond. The queen said, 'O folks, you've accomplished a great task. But where would I go for a breath of fresh air? Make a lush green garden for me to enjoy fresh and fragrant air.' The apsaras pondered for a while, 'Yes, you do deserve a garden to enjoy fresh air and sunlight.' They began to create a garden for her. They planted several flowering plants. They planted champa, kevra, jai, javli, marva and jasmine. A garden stood there, green and glistening. Before day break a new palace was built. *Khama!*

The apsaras built a seven-storeyed palace.

They built a seven-storeyed palace.

They built a palace for their friend.

The apsaras made a garden for her to stroll.

They built a garden for her to stroll.

They built a glistening green garden.

The apsaras spoke to their friend,

They spoke to their friend,



‘Listen to what we say.’

‘Eat, drink and prosper ever after, O Hirapath.

Eat, drink and prosper ever after.

And be happy with your family.’

‘If ever you need our help, O friend,

If ever you need our help,

Just think of us and we’ll come to your aid.’

The apsaras departed.

They departed.

They returned to Ambavadi.

The day broke and pale dawn set over land.

The day broke, and pale dawn set over land.

The first streak of light brightened the sky.

The people of Gadh Gujhanian were amazed.

The people of Gadh Gujhanian were amazed.

What a spectacle they beheld!

(An accompanist: A new palace was built overnight! The lead singer: Yes, it’s true.)

Behold! A new palace has been built.

A new palace has been built.

A palace has been constructed on the outskirts.

Even the sun looked pale before its magnificence.

The sun looked pale before its magnificence.

They set eyes on such a magnificent palace!

The koels cooed around.

The koels cooed around.

The koels cooed in the glistening green garden.

This is a tale of noble people, O brother.

This is a tale of noble people.

Their noble deeds are praiseworthy.



Amba, the apsara, said, ‘O Hirapath, you won’t be left to your fate. Summon us to your aid whenever you are in distress. We will all come to your help. You mustn’t feel lonely. May you eat, drink and prosper ever after. We must bid you farewell.’ The nine lac apsaras left for their heavenly abode. To Ambawadi they returned. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) Hirapath and Dhandhal, the king, were left behind in Gadh Gujhanian. The king woke up in the morning to see the most astonishing spectacle of his life. A splendid palace stood at the place where the people of his town used to excrete.

O maharaj! The king was fast asleep when the palace was built. As the day broke, the king awoke. He saw a seven-storeyed palace before him. He rubbed his eyes and thought, ‘O what a miracle! From where has this palace come up? Is it my old palace or am I in Vaikunth, the abode of Lord Krishna?’ When the people of Gadh Gujhanian woke up the new palace caught their sight. They marveled at its splendour and said, ‘Who must have carried out this enormous task?’

O maharaj! Dhandhal, the king, and Hirapath, the apsara, began to live in the seven-storeyed palace. They ate, drank and prospered. The queen said, ‘O king, if you wish, you may visit your former queen. But remember this. If ever your queen or the people of Gadh Gujhanian ask you about me, tell them that you have married a woman from a lowly community. Tell them that I belong to the lowest of the lowly ranks. But please never tell them that you have married a heavenly dame. Never boast about this. Never tell them a word about my origin. Promise me that you’ll never do so. If ever my real self is revealed to others, I’ll be compelled to leave you forever. Thereafter, we will never meet. Never, therefore, reveal my true identity to your queen or courtiers.’ The king pondered for a while. He promised his wife, ‘O queen, I’ll keep this secret close to my heart.’ And the king and the queen ate, drank and enjoyed the pleasures of life together in their palace of clouds. The days rolled into months and the months into years. *O maharaj!* May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The apsara was with child.



The apsara was with child.

She was carrying a child.

Nine months passed by.

Nine months passed by.

Nine months and nine days rolled by.

The queen was in labour.

She was in labour.

She was in pain.

The queen said to her maids,

She said to her maids,

‘O maids, listen to what I say.’

‘Summon the midwife at whose house a *paras-pipal* stands, O
maids.

Summon the midwife at whose house a *paras-pipal* stands.

‘Move swiftly, there is no time to delay.’

The maids went to call the midwife.

They went to call the midwife.

Hurriedly, they went to her place.

The midwife took some oil in a cup.

She took some oil in a cup.

She took some oil.

She massaged the belly of the queen.

She massaged the belly of the queen.

The queen was in severe pain.

A prince was born to Hirapath.

A prince was born to her.

The birth was announced by sounding golden gongs.

Long live Pabuji,¹⁵ the crown prince.

Long live the crown prince.

His birth was announced by sounding golden gongs.



People rejoiced by blowing trumpets and fifes.
 They rejoiced by blowing trumpets and fifes.
 'Long live the prince!' they cried.

Pabuji, so bright and endearing.
 He was so bright and endearing.
 He was born in Gadh Gujhanian.

The lord of the land was born in Gadh Gujhanian.
 He was born in Gadh Gujhanian.
 Long live the prince!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Dhandhal, the king, and Hirapath, the apsara, ate, drank and enjoyed life together in Gadh Gujhanian. They lived in joyful harmony. Days rolled into months and the months turned into years. Hirapath was with child. She was in labour pain after nine months and nine days. *Khama. (Tambur)* The queen said to her maids, 'O maids, I am in severe pain. I am not feeling well. Go and call the midwife.'

O maharaj! All the maids, Lali and Phuli, Remli and Temli, they gathered around the queen. They said to the queen, 'O queen, we haven't seen the midwife's home. Where do we go? How do we find her house?' The queen said, 'O girls, walk straight to the street in the east. A mirror hangs in her courtyard. A paras-pipal tree stands in front of her house. The fence of her house is thatched with *nagarvel*. Look for these signs. Run to her house and fetch her as quickly as possible.' Holding the ends of their clothes, the maids raced to the midwife's place. They called on the midwife, 'Listen, O old dame, wake up if you're asleep and come out if you're already up.' The old woman said, 'O girls, what's all this fuss about?' 'O old dame,' said the maids, 'the queen is in labour. She's in severe pain. She is very restless! You must make haste and come quickly.' The old woman fastened a pair of worn out footwear on her feet. She plodded along the way with a stick in her hand. *Khama! (Tambur)* She went to the palace of Hirapath. *O maharaj!* She climbed the stairs of the palace



of clouds. She asked for some oil. She massaged the queen's belly. She ran her hand over her abdomen. The queen was in labour. She screamed in pain. The palace of clouds was in commotion. The crown prince was about to be born. She would give birth to a prince in the morning. The prince would be virtuous and achieve greatness some day through his noble deeds. He'll bring honour to his family.

(*Tambur*) The queen was very restless. A prince was born to her. The birth was announced by sounding golden gongs. People were joyous and engaged in revelry. Long live the crown prince! He caused much pain to his mother at the time of his birth. Powdered sugar was distributed among the people who had gathered. Dry dates and pieces of coconut were doled out. *O maharaj!* Pabu Rathor came into this world. His cradle was made of pure gold. It was rocked with a gold shimmering string. Soon he started crawling and capering around. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Pabu's cradle was made of gold.

His cradle was made of gold.

With a shimmering string, it was rocked.

Pabu grew day and night.

He grew day and night.

He grew as time went by.

Pabu teetered and tottered around.

He teetered and tottered around.

He crawled and tumbled as he learnt to walk.

The prince started waddling.

He started waddling.

Soon he started playing in the streets.

The prince started playing in the streets.

He started playing in the streets.

He played in the alleyways of Gadh Gujhania.

The prince was sent to school.



He was sent to school.

He started going to school.

O maharaj!

The happiness of Dhandhal, the king, knew no bounds. A prince was born in his house. The cradle of the prince was rocked with a shimmering string. His cradle was made of pure gold. He grew by day and night. Soon he was crawling around. The queen reared him with love and care. The prince started waddling and tumbling. *Khama (Tambur)*. *O maharaj!* Soon the prince started playing in the streets. After some time Hirapath was again with child. *O maharaj!* Nine months and nine days rolled by, and another prince was born to her. *Khama!*

Chando, the prince, was born.

Chando, the prince, was born.

The apsara gave birth to another baby boy.

Long live the prince.

Long live the prince.

His birth was announced by sounding golden gongs.

People were joyous and there were sounds of revelry.

They were joyous and there were sounds of revelry.

Chando's birth was announced with drumbeats.

A pair of two brothers,

A pair of two brothers,

Pabu and Chando were brothers.

Born to the same mother,

Born to the same mother,

They were true brothers.

Chando's cradle was made of gold.

His cradle was made of gold.

With a shimmering string it was rocked.



He grew by day and night.
 He grew by day and night.
 He grew with each passing day.
 The prince teetered and tottered around.
 He teetered and tottered around.
 He crawled and tumbled as he learnt to walk.

O maharaj!

Princes were born to Dhandhal, the king. Pabu, the crown prince, had a baby brother. The birth was announced by sounding golden gongs. People were joyous and there was revelry everywhere. Gadh Gujhanian was in great bustle. Finely powdered sugar was distributed among the people who had gathered. Dry dates and pieces of coconut were doled out. The servants and slaves were showered with gifts. The air resounded with drumbeats. A prince was born to Dhandhal, the king. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) The second prince was named Chandoji. A pair of brothers was born. Pabuji sang lullaby to his brother. He looked after his brother well. Soon after the queen was blessed with two daughters. One was called Deval and Tema was the name of the other. The foursome grew in grandeur. All was well in Gadh Gujhanian.

Dhandhal, the king, lived with the heavenly maiden.
 He lived with the heavenly maiden.
 He dwelt at the apsara's palace.
 The king lived with his new queen.
 He lived with his new queen.
 With his new queen he lived.
 Twelve years passed by.
 Twelve years passed by.
 Twelve years passed by in a trice.
 One fine day,



One fine day,
It so happened one day.

The king suddenly remembered his first queen.
He remembered his first queen.
He thought of his other queen.

The king said to the apsara,
He said to the apsara,
'Listen to what I say, O queen.'

(An accompanist: O queen! The lead singer: *Khama!*)

'Twelve years have passed.
Twelve years have passed.
I haven't visited my first queen.'

The apsara said to the king,
She said to the king.
'Listen to what I say.'

Jeevta!

O maharaj!

This is a tale of virtuous people. A narrator narrates the story and the entire court listens to him intently. Dhandhal, the king, had wedded a new queen. Twelve years rolled by. *O maharaj!* They ate, drank and lived happily. The king hadn't visited his former queen. He did not think of her, nor did he speak to her. *O maharaj!* One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be auspicious. The king remembered his first queen. She appeared in his dream. Dhandhal, the king, woke up with a start and said to Hirapath, 'O queen, we are married for twelve years. We are blessed with four children. But my first queen lives alone. I have not spoken a word to her. I have not seen her for years. Today, I'll go to her palace.' *Khama!* Thus the king spoke to his queen. May you be well, *O honkaria.* Life is short but the tale never ends. *Khama!*



The queen said to the king,

She said to the king,

‘Listen to what I say, O king.’

‘If you wish you may go to her palace, O king.

You may go to her palace if you wish.

But listen to me carefully.’

‘Do not tell her anything about my family, O king.

Do not tell her anything about my family.

Do not reveal my true identity to her.’

‘Say that I hail from a low caste, O king.

Say that I hail from a low caste.

Tell her that I am a low caste woman.’

(An accompanist: O king, say that I hail from a lowly community. The lead singer: Yes, say exactly so.)

‘Otherwise, we’ll have to part, O king.

We’ll have to part.

Give me your word in the name of God.’

The king said to the queen,

He said to the queen,

Dhandhal, the king, said to his queen.

‘You are a heavenly damsel, O queen.

You are a heavenly damsel.

How do I say that you come from a lowly community?’

‘You hail from a noble family, O queen.

You hail from a noble family.

How can I speak of you being of low birth?’

‘Do as I say, O king.

Do as I say.

Don’t hesitate to lie for my sake.’

The king gave his word.



He gave his word.
 He gave his word in the name of God.
 'We'll have to part, O king.
 We'll have to part.
 If you break your promise, we'll have to part.'
 Dhandhal was bound by his words.
 He was bound by his words.
 He was bound by his promise.
 The king draped a dhoti with a golden lace.
 He draped a dhoti with a golden lace.
 He wrapped a dhoti with a shimmering lace.
 The king adorned himself in various ways.
 He adorned himself in various ways.
 He adorned himself in befitting finery.
 A royal turban adorned his head.
 A royal turban adorned his head.
 A royal turban he fastened on his head.
 Gold-encrusted footwear,
 Gold-encrusted footwear,
 Gold-encrusted footwear adorned his feet.
 The king held a stick in his hand.
 He held a stick in his hand.
 He swished it along as he walked.
 The king descended the stairs with quick steps.
 He descended with quick steps.
 He came down the palace of clouds.

Jeevta! Bhalai! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The king and the queen were deep in conversation. *Khama! (Tambur)*



The queen said, 'O king, listen carefully to what I say. We are a blessed couple. A pair of oxen looks very nice. A father and son always look apt together. A mother and daughter are equally decorous. O king, we all live together so happily! Please ensure that these ties are not severed. O lord, take care that we are not separated. None of us should be separated.' *O maharaj!* The queen continued, 'O king, your first queen may behave very agreeably with you but she is my rival. She'll try to prise out my secret. Please be on guard. Don't ever reveal my true identity. Give me your word.' (The singer and the accompanist clap hands in token of a pledge given and taken). 'I'll never reveal your identity,' the king promised his queen. *O maharaj!* The king draped a dhoti with a golden lace. He adorned himself in many fine ways. He placed a royal turban on his head. He fastened gold-encrusted footwear. He took a stick in his hand and said, 'O queen, take care and don't feel miserable while I'm away. Don't feel distressed. I'll be back in a couple of days.' The king took leave. He came down the palace of clouds. He went towards Manek Chawk. He passed through the market. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The king walked through the marketplace.

He walked through the marketplace.

He passed through the alleyways of Gadhi Gujhania.

(An accompanist: *Khama!* The lead singer: You said it well.)

The king swished his stick.

He swished his stick.

Swishing his stick, he walked by.

The queen was sitting by the lattice window.

She was sitting by the lattice window.

She was sitting by the lattice window in her palace.

The queen was watching from the lattice window.

She was watching from the lattice window.

She was looking out from the lattice window.



(An accompanist: She was looking at the king. The lead singer: Yes, it was so.)

The queen said to her maids,
She said to her maids,
'Listen to what I say, O maids.'

'The king is coming this way, O maids.
The king is coming this way.
He has reached the marketplace.'

(Someone from the audience: He's coming after many years.
The lead singer: Yes.)

'He's coming towards the palace, O maids.
He's coming towards the palace.
He's coming after twelve long years.'

(Someone from the audience: The queen is so happy. The lead singer: Yes, what you say is right.)

'Bring a copper vessel, O maids.
Bring a copper vessel.
Heat some water in a copper vessel.'

The maids heated some water.
They heated some water.
They heated the water with much haste.

'Fetch some *kanku* in a *kankavati*, O maids.
Fetch some *kanku* in a *kankavati*.
Bring an ornamental lamp-stand.'

(An accompanist: She wishes to welcome the king! The lead singer: Yes it is so.)

'Bring some grains of rice, O maids.
Bring some grains of rice.
O you wenches, bring an ornamental lamp-stand.'



Bhalai! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Swishing his stick, the king walked through the marketplace. He arrived at Manek Chawk. He passed through the lanes and alleyways of Gadh Gujhania. He walked with long strides and short steps. *O maharaj!* Morchang, the queen, was sitting in her palace of clouds. She caught sight of the king. The king was walking through the marketplace. The queen saw him walking across the street. She gazed at him and wondered, 'Here comes the king. But where is he going?' She watched intently.

O maharaj! The king took the way to her palace. *Khama! Khama!* *(Tambur)* Morchang, the queen, called out, 'O maids! O Lali, Phuli, Remli and Temli! O Tamku and Jhamku, listen to what I say. My king had turned away from me. Twelve long years lie between us. But today, like the season's first rain, he is coming to my palace. What a miracle! The king is heading this way. O girls, move swiftly. Don't waste a moment. He is coming to the palace.' *Khama! (Tambur)* 'O maids, heat some water in a copper vessel. Fetch some kanku powder and lamps and grains of rice. Let us hurry to Suraj Pol and welcome the king by sprinkling rice along his way. We'll put an auspicious kanku mark on his forehead and bring him in with much pomp and honour. O maids, he is my lord, he is my own.' *O maharaj!* She looked so youthful! At the very sight of her beloved, she turned young. *(The singer laughs.)*¹⁶

(Tambur) In the company of her maids, the queen descended the stairs of the cloud-capped palace. She went to Manek Chawk. She raced towards Suraj Pol. The king had just arrived at Suraj Pol. They met each other midway. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. *(Khama!)*

The queen paid her respect with a lighted lamp.
She paid her respect with a lighted lamp.
She bowed over and again.



The queen adorned the king's forehead with an auspicious
mark.

She adorned his forehead with an auspicious mark.
She put a red mark on his forehead.

Man and wife together,
Man and wife together,
The union of husband and wife looked venerable.

Never part from your mate.
Never part from your mate.
No husband and wife should be separated.

The queen dropped rice on his way.
She dropped rice on his way.
She extended a welcoming hand.

The king ascended the palace of clouds.
He ascended the palace of clouds.
He entered the lofty palace.

'Lay a high couch for my king,' said the queen.
'Lay a high couch for him.
Spread a silk mattress on the bed.'

The maids laid a high couch.
They laid a high couch.
They spread a silk mattress over it.

'Be seated on the bed, O king,' said the queen.
'Be seated on the bed.

You've left behind the new queen to be with me!

(An accompanist: O, she showered such affection! The lead
singer: Yes, you said it right.)

The queen said to her maids,
She said to her maids,
'Listen to what I say.'



‘Run to a liquor shop, O maids.

Run to a liquor shop.

Bring the best brew of wine.’

(An accompanist: The king has come after a long time. The lead singer: Yes, you said it right.)

‘Rush to the shepherd’s place, O maids.

Rush to the shepherd’s place.

Bring a male goat, fresh and strong.’

‘Don’t waste a moment, O maids.

Don’t waste a moment.

There is no time for delay.’

The maids carried out her orders swiftly.

They carried out her orders swiftly.

They rushed to accomplish the tasks.

Half the maids went to the liquor vendor.

Half the maids went to the liquor vendor.

They rushed to the liquor shop.

The others ran to the shepherd’s home

They ran to the shepherd’s home.

They set off for the shepherd’s house.

The best brew of wine,

The best brew of wine,

They bought the best brew of wine.

A male goat, so fresh and strong.

A male goat, so fresh and strong.

The maids bought a goat, fresh and strong.

The maids accomplished the tasks.

They accomplished all the tasks

The maids carried out the queen’s orders.



The maids brought in the wine.

They brought in the wine.

They fetched the best brew.

The maids brought in a male goat.

They brought in a male goat.

They fetched a goat, fresh and strong.

Look how a woman intrigues.

Look how a woman intrigues.

How she waits upon her spouse!

(An accompanist: If she does not serve well, she'd be driven out. The lead singer: Yes, you said it right.)

The virtuous women in this world, O brothers,

The virtuous women in this world,

They alone should prosper.

The feuding ones, O brothers,

The feuding women,

The treacherous women should be condemned.

Be affectionate and caring, O brothers.

Be affectionate and caring.

One should be affectionate to one's spouse.

O maharaj!

The king sat upright. A healthy, strong goat was butchered. The king was served sumptuous steaks of goat-meat. The queen offered him an excellent brew of wine. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The king sipped the liquor.

He sipped the liquor.

He sipped it delightfully.

Sumptuous steaks of goat-meat,



Sumptuous steaks of goat-meat,
He relished the steaks of meat.

The queen spoke to the king,
She spoke to the king,
'Listen to what I say, O king.'

(An accompanist: She'll pledge and make you promise in the
name of God. The lead singer: Yes, You said it right.)

'Countless woes you've afflicted upon me, O king.
Countless woes you've afflicted.
A bed of thorns has been my predicament.'

'Never did I affront you, O king.
Never did I affront you.
Why did you forsake me without any reason?'

'How could you forget me, O king?
How could you forget me?
We were happy together.'

'What ailed you, O king?
What ailed you?
What agony drew you away from me?'

(An accompanist: He was smitten by another woman. The lead
singer: Yes, you said it right.)

The king was completely sozzled.
He was completely sozzled.
He was inebriated.

'Do not feel annoyed, O queen,' said the king.
'Do not feel annoyed.
I've married another woman.'

'May you be blessed, O king.
May you be blessed.
May you be happy with your new bride.'



'You had gone after a boar, O king.
 You had gone after a boar.
 You had left the town in pursuit of a boar.'
 'You had promised, O king,
 You had promised,
 You had promised to bring the boar's meat.'
 'But you relished it by yourself, O king.
 You relished it alone.
 O, you were mean and ate it alone!'
 'You seem bound to the new queen, O king.
 You seem bound to the new queen.
 How did you remember me today?'
 'May you be blessed, O king.
 May you be blessed.
 But from where has the new bride come?'
 How a woman intrigues, O brothers!
 O, how she intrigues!
 She'll dig out matters closest to a man's heart.
 'The new queen is like my younger sister, O king.
 She's like my younger sister.
 She's like my sibling.'
 'I found her in the dense forest, O queen,' said the king.
 'I found her in the dense forest.
 She was wandering in the wilderness.'
 'A low-bred woman she is, O queen.
 A low-bred woman she is.
 I've married a lowly dame.'
 'You're lying through your teeth, O king.
 You're lying through your teeth.
 One should not lie to one's kin.'



The queen kept replenishing the empty goblets.

She kept replenishing the empty goblets.

The king was no longer in his senses.

(An accompanist: Keep filling the goblets, he'll speak the truth.

The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

The queen wailed and wept.

She wailed and wept.

'O king, listen to what I say.'

'Her parents and kin, O king,

Her parents and kin,

They are like my own folks.'

'Her brothers and siblings, O king,

Her brothers and siblings,

Are they not my own relations?'

(*Jeevta!*)

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

O, how the king and his queen relished the excellent liquor! How they sang in unison! The queen offered him the best liquor. She served him sumptuous steaks. The queen said, 'O king, listen to what I say. You've afflicted countless woes upon me. You've made my life a bed of thorns. I've never affronted you, nor have I ever disdained you. You left in the pursuit of a boar. You swore not to return without your prey. You had said that we'll eat together the meat of the beast. You left me behind to fulfill your pledge. I've been loyal to you. Never have I displeased you. You did kill the boar, but you didn't care even to inform me about your return. You brought a new wife. I did not protest. But you neglected me. O king, now that you've come to me, tell me the truth, what afflicted you?'

(*Tambur*) The king said, 'O queen, I hold no grudges against you. But I've wedded a new bride. In order to please her, I kept away from you.' *Khama! Khama!* The king and the queen thus engaged in



conversation. ‘O queen, don’t be so resentful. You haven’t annoyed me, I have no rancour against you. I was waiting for my new queen to settle down. But we should put all that behind us and talk about our sweet and bitter times.’ *O maharaj!* The queen offered him the best brew of liquor. The king was completely inebriated. How a woman prises out a secret! ‘O king, may you forever be happy with the new queen. She is as dear to me as my own sibling. I’m like her elder sister. May you live happily together! But from which country she hails? Tell me about her parentage. God forbid, we might need to pay visit to her folks. Don’t hold back the truth.’

(*Tambur*) The king said, ‘O queen, I found her in the dense forest. I was smitten by her beauty and made her my queen.’ The queen said, ‘O king, you aren’t petty. You are a valiant king, gallant and fearless! You won’t fall for a vagrant woman. She must belong to a noble clan. But of course, why would you share your secret with me when we have estranged?’ (The audience laughs.)¹⁷ ‘O king, I’ve fallen from your grace,’ the queen wailed and wept and the king started to prattle. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) The king replied, ‘O queen, she’s a low-caste woman, ignoble and ill-begotten.’ The queen was quick to retort, ‘You have made up this story, O king. Why have you come here if you don’t wish to confide in me? Distant and indifferent you’ve become.’ (The audience laughs.)

(*Tambur*) The queen engaged the king in talk. She prised out his secret. The king babbled the truth. The king forgot his promise, he was out of his wits. See, how liquor makes people speak! No secret can they keep. Liquor digs out forgotten feuds. One must drink in safe limits or one is bound to meet one’s doom. The king was completely drunk. He said, ‘Listen, O queen, I have not fallen for a vagrant wench. A heavenly apsara I have wedded. Hirapath is her name.’ The king was under the spell of liquor. The heavenly apsara immediately learnt that the pledge was broken. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Absolutely sozzled was the king.

Absolutely sozzled was the king.



He was under the sway of liquor.

The king spoke to the queen.

He spoke to the queen.

‘Listen to what I say, O queen.’

‘I’ve brought a celestial maiden, O queen.

I’ve brought a celestial maiden.

I’ve married an apsara.’

The king had pledged to Hirapath.

He had pledged to Hirapath.

He had broken his promise to her.

Word reached the apsara’s palace.

Word reached the apsara’s palace.

Hirapath came to know about it.

The queen held her daughter to her breast.

She held her daughter to her breast.

She suckled Tema, the princess.

The news reached the apsara.

It reached the apsara.

The news reached the palace of clouds.

The queen wailed and wept.

She wailed and wept.

Hirapath, the queen, wailed and wept.

‘Suckle your last, O child,’ she said.

Suckle your last.

You will not have a chance to suckle hereafter.’

‘Your father has acted as a thoughtless weakling, O child.

He has acted as a thoughtless weakling.

He has foolishly separated us.’

Chando and Pabu, her sons,



Chando and Pabu, her sons,
She huddled them in her lap.

The queen hugged and cuddled them.
She hugged and cuddled them.

‘O my dears, eat, drink and prosper in life,’ said she.

Mother and her children,
Mother and her children,
Mother and her children will be separated.

The queen spoke a few words of wisdom.
She spoke a few words of wisdom.
She instilled words of wisdom in her children.

Great upheaval gripped the palace.
Great upheaval gripped the palace.
The queen forsook her palace.

The queen abandoned her home.
She abandoned her home.
Leaving her children behind, she left the palace forever.

Jeevta!





KALU KHENSI

One fine day an incident took place.

One fine day an incident took place.

It turned out to be auspicious.

Kalu set out to hunt.

He set out to hunt.

He pondered for a while.

'A boar frequents the millet field.

He frequents the millet field.

A boar seems to frequent this path.'

'A prized boar, a favourite of the Rathors,

A prized boar, a favourite of the Rathors,

He often comes this way.'

Kalu waited for the boar.

He waited for the boar.

He keenly awaited the boar.

Kalu bent to look for hoof marks.

He bent to look for hoof marks.

He looked for the boar's trail.

Kalu traced some marks.

He traced some marks.

The boar's trail he traced.

Kalu followed the trail.



He followed the trail.

He trod along the trail marks.

To his chosen place in the millet field,

To his chosen place in the millet field,

The boar walked to his favourite spot.

Kalu dug pits in the ground.

He dug pits in the ground.

He dug pits between the mango and jamun trees.

Kalu laid out a pair of snares.

He laid out a pair of snares.

He laid traps to capture the boar.

Kalu set a hiding place.

He set a hiding place.

Kalu Khensi sat still in a hideout.

O maharaj!

The Khensi of Jhayeria set out. He trod along the path. He arrived at the pasturage of Jhenjhanian. He moved from the mango tree to the jamun tree. He looked around for signs of the wild beast. He saw clear signs of a boar's hoofs. He followed the trail. He came to a millet field. The hooves of the boar were dug deep upon the frequented path. Kalu pondered for a while. 'The treasured animal of the Rathors treads on this path. He'll definitely visit this spot at night.' Kalu, the Khensi, dug some pits in the ground. He laid a few snares. He sat still in his hideout. As time ticked by, the boar came snorting, his heavy feet thumping on the ground. Kalu Khensi became alert and agile. He picked aloft his Bundikota gun. The boar reached the millet field. Kalu Khensi aimed his gun and fired. The boar fell in a single shot. *Khama!*

A loud bang rent the air.

A loud bang rent the air.

The bang was heard far and wide.



The sound pricked the Rathor ears.
 It pricked their ears.
 Who had fired a gun at such a late hour?
 The Rathor chief sprang on his feet.
 He sprang on his feet.
 'Listen to what I say, O chieftains,' said he.
 'Get up, I heard a gun shot, O brothers.
 Get up, I heard a gun shot.
 In the middle of the night I heard a gun shot.'
 'Who has shot a gun, O Rathors?
 Who has shot a gun?'
 A shot was heard from the mango-jamun grove.
 Picking up their weapons,
 Picking up their weapons,
 They rushed out of their homes.
 The Rathors hastened to the mango and jamun grove.
 They hastened to the mango and jamun grove.
 Hurriedly, they reached the grove.
 Kalu was leaving with his game.
 He was leaving with his game.
 He was departing with the carcass.
 The Rathors shouted aloud.
 They shouted aloud.
 'Hey, who fired in the middle of the night?'
 Kalu promptly replied,
 He promptly replied,
 'O Rathors, listen to what I say.'
 'I shot the boar, O Rathors.
 I shot the boar.
 I fired a gun at the boar.'



'You shouldn't have killed the boar, O Kalu.

You shouldn't have killed the boar.

Why have you killed our favourite boar?'

'I merely killed a beast of the wilderness,' said Kalu.

'I killed a beast of the wilderness.

I killed a wild beast.'

'I'll give you a fair share, O Rathors.

I'll give you a fair share.

I'll trade the dead boar with you.'

'We fed you in your lean days, O Kalu,' said the Rathors.

'We fed you in your lean days.

But you bit the very fingers that fed you.'

'We have lived in harmony, O Kalu.

We've lived in harmony.

But you got under our feet like an ungrateful dog.'

The bitter words pierced Kalu.

The bitter words pierced him.

Kalu was annoyed by their words.

'I've hunted a beast of the wilderness, O Rathors.

I've hunted a beast of the wilderness.

I only killed a wild boar.'

'How dare you say so, you ungrateful man?

How dare you say so?

How dare you be so brazen about it?'

Thus they fought over a dead boar.

They fought over a dead boar.

A feud took place over a dead boar.

Important people get involved in large troubles.

Important people get involved in large troubles.

The bigger a person, the larger the quandary.



They howled and bellowed at one another.

They howled and bellowed.

The Rathors thrashed Kalu.

They wielded their swords in a duel.

They wielded their swords in a duel.

They crossed swords for the sake of a boar.

(An accompanist: One of them will fall. The lead singer: Yes, you said it right.)

Kalu was battered black and blue.

He was battered black and blue.

He was killed for the sake of a boar.

Ill was done in this world.

Ill was done in this world.

Kalu was killed for the sake of a boar.

O brothers! Kalu fired his gun in the mango-jamun grove. He shot the boar. He came out of hiding and went toward the beast. The boar was lying still. It didn't stir a bit. 'What a piece of luck! I've got a prized animal. The Rathors have fed him well, it is a strong and meaty boar! I'll carry it home.' He tried to hitch it high. He pondered for a while. The sound of the gun shot reached the palace of clouds. The sons of Dhan Rathor and Bhim Rathor were in slumber. They were the valiant sons of the land. They were brave and courageous. They sprang to their feet and wondered, 'O brothers! Who has fired a gun? Who has dared to trespass our fields?' They fastened the girdles and picked up their lances and guns. They lifted aloft their bows and arrows. They took their fierce spears. The Bundikota guns adorned their shoulders. 'It's time to prove one's mettle.' They descended the palace with hurried steps. They hastened to the mango-jamun grove. They encircled the grove. They prepared for an ambush.

(*Tambur*) Dragging the boar, Kalu began to walk away. The Rathors closed ranks. The Rathors asked, 'Who fired the gun at this hour?



Who has disturbed the calm of night?’ Kalu said, ‘The boar came my way and I shot it down.’ (*Tambur*) The Rathors spoke aloud, ‘O Kalu, the boar used to frequent the millet fields. Why did you kill him?’ Kalu said, ‘O Rathors, I’ve only killed a beast of the wilderness. I didn’t know that it was your favourite. However, I’m willing to give you a share of its meat. We’ll cut the beast to pieces and divide its meat. You’ll get one portion, and I as the hunter, will claim twice as much.’ The Rathors got annoyed. ‘How dare you say such things?’ A halfwit may brag but a valiant’s words are never wasted. The Rathors said, ‘We fed you in your lean days. But you bit the very fingers that fed you. O Kalu, you’ve behaved foolishly.’ ‘O Rathors,’ Kalu said, ‘Mind your language. You mustn’t say such harsh words. I merely killed a beast that roamed freely in the wilderness.’ They fought over the dead boar. The prowess of the brave men was put to test. Spears flew through the air like slashing rain. Gunshots deafened the sky. This generated great commotion.

(*Tambur*) The mango-jamun grove was in disarray. Spears were hurled like heavy hail. The Rathor prince aimed his Bundikota gun. The gun thundered and Kalu Khensi was shot dead. O Lord, for the sake of a boar, a human life was wasted. Ill was done in this world. The feud would have a tragic outcome. May you be well, O *honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.





PABU AND CHANDO

Jhendaro and Mendaro were brothers.

Jhendaro and Mendaro were brothers.

Kalu's sons grew up in Jhayeria.

Pabu and Chando were worthy sons.

Pabu and Chando were worthy sons.

They were the descendants of Dhan Rathor.

Deval and Tema were sisters.

Deval and Tema were sisters.

Tema was the youngest of them all.

Tema was still in her cradle,

She was still in her cradle,

She was an infant when their mother left.

The motherless siblings,

The motherless siblings,

They rocked Tema in a golden crib.

Pabu sang a lullaby to Tema.

He sang a lullaby to Tema.

He rocked the crib and sang a lullaby.

'Hush! Be quiet, O sister mine.

Hush! Be quiet, O sister mine.'

She swayed in a large crib.

'I'll get you married in Jhayeria, O sister.



I'll get you married in Jhayeria.
You'll be married to a noble man.'

'I'll get you married to Jhendaro Khensi, O sister.
I'll get you married to Jhendaro Khensi.
You'll be married to a Khensi prince.'

Entranced, Tema listened from her crib.
Entranced, she listened from her crib.
She listened to her brother intently.

'I'll bestow a large dowry upon you, O Tema.
I'll bestow a large dowry upon you.
Hush, don't cry, O sister.'

O maharaj!

The feud continued. Kalu Khensi had died at the hands of the Rathors. The Khensi and Rathors became sworn enemies. Mendaro was the younger of the two brothers. *O maharaj!* King Dhandhal had many children. Chando and Pabu, Huro and Buro, Dhebo and Dhepho were six brothers. Tema and Deval were their sisters. *O maharaj!* Pabu and Chando were the heirs of King Dhandhal. Tema, the youngest, grew up in her brother's care. She was rocked in a gold-engraved cradle. Her cradle was rocked with a shimmering string. The motherless child cried incessantly. She pined for mother's milk. She longed for her mother's warmth. She wept, wailed and whimpered in her cradle. Chando and Pabu sang lullabies to put her to sleep. *O maharaj!* 'Hush O baby, hush, O sister, hush to a lull,' sang they. But as hungry she was, she would not listen.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Their baby sister cried ceaselessly. Chando sang a lullaby, 'O sister, don't cry. Listen to the promises I make to you.' Pabu tried to pacify her, 'O sister, we will bury our feud with the Khensis for your sake. I'll get you married in Jhayeria. You'll be joined in wedlock with Jhendaro, the son of Kalu Khensi.' Tema listened intently from her crib. *O maharaj!* She hushed as she listened. She was but a little child. She cried yet louder the next moment. O



maharaj! Chando and Pabu, her brothers, sang lullabies to hush her to sleep. To keep her quiet they tried various ideas. Pabuji sang aloud, ‘O sister, listen to my song. I’ll bestow upon you a large dowry. I’ll gift you golden pitchers and a golden *indhoni*. I’ll give you clothes embroidered with silver and gold. You will have a herd of healthy cattle. You’ll receive Parevo, the stud-bull, the pasturage of Jhenjhanian and the Dipawali Tank as your wedding gifts.’ Pabuji promised her numerous gifts and Tema listened intently from her crib. (*Tambur*) She was all ears to the lullaby. Time ticked and Tema grew by day and night.

Tema grew by day and night.

She grew by day and night.

She grew as time went by.

Tema teetered and tottered around.

She teetered and tottered around.

She crawled and tumbled as she learnt to walk.

Tema started toddling.

She started toddling.

She started playing outdoors.

Tema frisked and frolicked in the streets.

She frisked and frolicked in the streets.

She played in the lanes and alleys.

She blossomed into a young woman.

She blossomed into a young woman.

She entered the spring of her life.

Chando pondered in the middle of the night.

He pondered in the middle of the night.

He felt worried about his sister.

Tema was in the first flush of youth.

She was in the first flush of youth.

She had entered the spring of her life.



‘Time has come for her nuptials,’ thought Chando.

‘Time had come for her nuptials.

We must arrange her nuptials.’

‘Summon a learned Brahmin,’ said he.

‘Summon a learned Brahmin.’

A learned Brahmin was summoned.

The Brahmin arrived in haste.

He arrived in haste.

He arrived at the court of the Rathors.

(Tambur)

Tema was in the first flush of her youth. She was a blooming young maiden. *O maharaj!* Chando and Pabu pondered for a while, ‘Tema is in the spring of her life. It is time for her to leave her parents’ house. It’s not wise to have her with us any more. A youthful maiden can falter on occasions. She should be bound in wedlock.’ Thus they discussed in the middle of the night. *O maharaj!* Always, action should be taken at the appropriate moment. Find her a match, while it’s not too late. A father who fails to fulfill his duties is at fault. *(Tambur)* Chando said, ‘Summon a Brahmin quick and fast. O chieftains, call a Brahmin, learned and wise.’

A priest, learned and wise, was summoned. The Brahmin arrived within no time. He arrived at the court of the Rathors. ‘O wise man!’ said the Rathor prince, ‘My sister has entered the spring of her life. We need to act quick and fast. A suitable groom should be found for her. Set off immediately and find her a mate.’ The brahmin replied, ‘O Lord, where should I go?’ ‘O wise man, take the route to Jhayeria and obtain the consent of Jhendaro Khensi. He is a suitable match for our sister.’ A wise priest is as good as one’s parent. *(Tambur)* The priest was given a dry coconut. The priest set off immediately. He trod along the road to Jhayeria. Hurriedly, he tore along the path. He arrived at Jhayeria. The Khensis were assembled in court. Green and yellow rugs adorned the floor. Courtly matters were being discussed. The hookahs were filled with the best hemp. Opium



drinks were being served generously. The best brew of liquor was being passed from hand to hand. The venerable brahmin arrived at the court.

The brahmin bowed and called out a greeting.

He bowed and called out a greeting.

He paid his respect to the courtiers.

Mendaro said to the Brahmin,

He said to the Brahmin,

‘O wise man, where do you come from?’

Mendaro said to the Brahmin,

He said to the Brahmin,

‘O respected one, relate the cause of your journey.’

Thus spoke the Brahmin.

Thus he spoke,

‘O king, I implore you, please listen to me.’

‘From Gadh Gujhanian, I have come.

From Gadh Gujhanian, I have come.

I’ve come with a proposal.’

‘We seek your hand for Tema, O Khensi.

We seek your hand for Tema, O Khensi.

I’ve come with Tema’s proposal.’

‘But we are enemies,’ said the Khensi prince.

‘We are enemies.

We belong to rival families.’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The Brahmin bowed and greeted the king. ‘O wise man,’ Mendaro Khensi said, ‘where is your house and home? Whom do you serve?’

The Brahmin said, ‘Mine is no humble kingdom, O king. Gadh Gujhanian is my homeland.’ The Khensi said, ‘Speak your mind. What great purpose brings you here?’ ‘O king, I’ve come with a



marriage proposal. I have been sent by Chando and Pabu, the rulers of Gadh Gujhania. Our maiden is pretty and fair. She is youthful and agile. Under her supple shapely form, her cot bends like a bower. And the straps of her blouse snap when she curves her body with verve. She is in the spring of her life. I have been asked to find her a spouse. I seek the consent of Jhendaro Khensi.’ (*Tambur*) ‘This wise man exalted the virtues of the damsel. He has arrested the king’s interest,’ thought the chieftains. The Khensi prince pondered for a while. He said, ‘We should bury the old feud. Why can we not forget our age-old enmity? We must let go of our tale of the past. The Rathors ask for amity. Let us respond in the same spirit.’

O maharaj! The chiefs pondered for a while, ‘Curse befall them who meddle in matters of matrimony. One should mend rather than break relationships. If the king is keen on forgetting the feud, who are we to come in his way? If one’s own blood is not hot enough, why should anyone else’s blood boil for no reason? Rather, we should bury the feud. It is better that we put out the fire and bring home the bride.’

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Thus they thought and spoke aloud, ‘O king, honour the proposal immediately. The venerable Brahmin should return home with his wish fulfilled.’ The Brahmin was showered with lavish presents. With quick, hasty steps, he bounded back. He came to Gadh Gujhania and went straight to the court. He entered the court of the Rathors with a smile. (*Tambur*) The Rathors were awaiting his return impatiently. As soon as the Brahmin entered the court, they asked, ‘O respected one, relate everything in detail.’ The wise brahmin said with a grin, ‘O king, the proposal has been honoured with much affection. Let us fix the wedding day. When shall we have the *pithi* ceremony for Tema? Tell me the day and I’ll go back to convey the message to our new relatives.’ May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

A day was fixed for the pithi ceremony.

A day was fixed for the pithi.

A day for Tema’s pithi was decided.



The full moon day was considered auspicious.
 The full moon day was considered auspicious.
 The pithi ceremony was decided to be held on full moon day.
 ‘In the name of Lord Ganesh, O Brahmin,’ said the Rathor
 prince.
 ‘In the name of Lord Ganesh,
 Do us a favour in the name of Ganesh.’
 ‘Go to Jhayeria, O Brahmin.
 Go to Jhayeria.
 Inform our relations about the wedding day.’
 The Brahmin trod along the path.
 He trod along the path.
 He trudged along the path to Jhayeria.
 The day for the pithi was decided for Jhendaro.
 The day for the pithi was decided.
 The day of the pithi was fixed for the groom.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Invitations were sent out in Jhayeria. Everyone was invited. ‘O
 brothers, O chieftains, O farmers and potters, O tillers and cobblers,
 O weavers and singers, everybody should attend the pithi ceremony
 of our king. Our crown prince is going to wed.’ Yellow coloured rice
 grains were given as a token of invitation. Water was heated in a
 copper vessel. The bridegroom was given a ceremonial bath. The
 pithi ceremony of the groom was arranged. The king arrived at the
 auspicious hour. The women sang customary songs. The people of
 the town were in revelry. *Khama! (Tambur)*

The Khensis went to Gadh Gujhania for the wedding.
 They went to Gadh Gujhania for the wedding.
 They arrived at Gadh Gujhania for their king’s wedding.
 The Khensis arrived at the glistening green garden



They arrived at the glistening green garden.
They reached the garden at Gadh Gujhanian.

It was time for the nuptials.

It was time for the nuptials.

Jhendaro had arrived for the nuptials.

The Rathors were preparing for the wedding rites.

They were preparing for the wedding rites.

It was time for the wedding ceremony.

Jhendaro came for the ceremony of *toran*.

He came for the ceremony of toran.

He arrived to honour the toran.

The bridegroom struck at the toran.

He struck at the toran.

He struck at the toran with his sword.

Jhendaro completed the circumambulation around the fire.

He performed the circumambulation around the fire.

He circled the sacred fire.

The bride started to perform the circumambulation.

She started to perform the circumambulation.

Suddenly, she stopped while circling the sacred fire.

Tema asked to name her dowry.

She asked to name her dowry.

She asked for her dowry.

‘Grant her all that she asks for,’ said Pabu.

‘Grant her all that she asks for.

All her wishes should be fulfilled.’

‘Give me buffaloes strong and stout, O brothers,’ said Tema.

‘Give me buffaloes strong and stout.

Give me buffaloes in dowry.’



'Your dowry was named long back, O Tema,' said the Rathors.
 'Your dowry was named long back.
 We promised you a dowry while rocking you in the cradle.'
 'The pasturage of Jhenjhanian,
 The pasturage of Jhenjhanian,
 The pasturage of Jhenjhanian was promised to you in dowry.'
 'The Dipawali Tank, too, O Tema,
 The Dipawali Tank,
 The Dipawali Tank was promised to you.'
 Pabu and Chando bestowed the dowry.
 They bestowed the dowry.
 They bestowed the dowry upon Tema.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The pithi ceremony was held for the bridegroom. The wise Brahmin ran back to Gadh Gujhanian. 'O king, the pithi ceremony for the groom has been held,' said he, 'let us fix a day for the pithi ceremony for our sister.' The Rathors pondered for a while. 'It's time to celebrate. Invite each and every person around. Let us arrange for the pithi ceremony for our sister.' The chieftains invited one and all. They distributed yellow coloured rice.

O maharaj! At the appointed time, people thronged for the ritual. Water was heated in a copper vessel. Tema was given a ceremonial bath. The bride was led in for the pithi ceremony. Women smeared her body with the fragrant paste of pithi. They sang the customary songs. Sound of *shehnai* and drums were heard. The dancers danced joyfully. The entertainers delighted people with various skills. Musical instruments were played. What revelry! The beaux were busy in buying combs. The lasses indulged in buying eye-salve. The widows eagerly purchased snuff powder. *Khama! (Tambur) O maharaj!* Gadh Gujhanian rejoiced on the occasion. Jhayeria was celebrating with pomp. The bride was from Gadh Gujhanian and the groom hailed from Jhayeria. It was an auspicious wedding. The



wise Brahmin said, ‘O Chando and Pabu, the nuptials will be solemnized on the day after the full moon. On that day the groom’s wedding procession will arrive.’ On the appointed day, the wedding party reached Gadh Gujhanian. Much revelry was sounded. Musical instruments were played. The dancers twirled joyfully.

O, behold the wedding procession! The wedding procession arrived at Gadh Gujhanian. The Rathors led their guests to the glistening green garden. The garden was in full bloom. The champa and kevra trees were laden with flowers. The calls of the black-winged koels rent the air, and jet-black drone-bees buzzed around merrily. The guests rested for a while in the glistening green garden. *O maharaj!* The *vevans* sang wedding songs all day long. At the auspicious hour, the groom was called upon to honour the toran. *O maharaj!* Holding a sword, the groom arrived to honour the toran. The bride’s aunt welcomed him ceremoniously. Everyone was in high spirits. The womenfolk from the groom’s side sang *phatanas*. They aimed banter at the bride’s aunt. She was made fun of by describing her as a woman with a bulging belly, a lady with crooked teeth and an oversized abdomen.

O maharaj! The groom arrived at the wedding pavilion. He performed the circumambulation around the fire along with his bride. Once, twice and thrice he went around the fire. (*Tambur*) Tema, the bride, led him in the fourth round. But while circling the fire, she stopped suddenly. She asked her brothers to name her dowry. *O maharaj!* Chando and Pabu, both her worthy brothers said, ‘O sister, why did you stop abruptly? Say what is on your mind. You must not hesitate.’ Tema said, ‘Our mother forsook us when I was in the cradle. O brothers mine, you are like parents to me. You are my only kin. This is the time when you should state my dowry.’ *O maharaj!* Chando said, ‘You’ll receive pitchers of pure gold and also a golden indhoni to carry them on. A pair of golden footwear, O sister, will be yours. You name anything and all your heart’s desires will be fulfilled.’ (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Pabu said to his sister, ‘I’ll give you buffaloes, healthy and stout. The pasturage of Jhenjhanian and the Dipawali Tank will be yours. O sister, name all that you wish for and all your



heart's desires will be fulfilled.' *O maharaj!* Tema completed the last circumambulation. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The wedding was solemnized.
 It was solemnized.
 The Khensi king wedded Tema, the princess.
 The newly-wedded queen,
 The newly-wedded queen,
 She arrived at the glistening green garden.
 Tema arrived at the palace of clouds.
 She arrived at the palace of clouds.
 She ascended the steps of the palace of clouds.
 The queen of Jhayeria,
 The queen of Jhayeria,
 Tema became the queen of Jhayeria.
 Khensi ruled over the land of Jhayeria.
 He ruled over the land of Jhayeria.
 Khensi was the sovereign of Jhayeria.

(Tambur)

O brothers, the king wedded Tema, the princess. Along with his new queen, the king arrived at Jhayeria. The groom led his wife to the palace of clouds. The people of Jhayeria gathered for the ceremony. They amused the royal couple by aiming banter at them. They wished them well and dispersed. Indeed, it was a lovely and memorable occasion. The groom and his bride were left alone. Tema, the princess, became the queen of Jhayeria. They led a happy, blissful life. Tema and Deval were sisters. Deval too got married in the course of time. She was wedded to Bhim, the Charan chief of Bhagania. Happily and blissfully they lived. Tema was in the golden period of her life. Leisurely, she would swing on a swinging board. Contentedly, she would amble around in the glistening green garden. Water was



heated in a golden vessel for her to bathe. Everything was in abundance. The days rolled into months and the months turned into years. Peace prevailed over earth. The Rathors reigned happily over Gadh Gujhanian. The years ticked by in the blink of an eye.





ALKHU

(Tambur) O maharaj!

One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be very auspicious. In her palace Tema was in deep slumber. O *maharaj*! The night wore away and the first crowing of the cock heralded the day. Tema's mother-in-law awoke with a start. She shook Tema, her daughter-in-law, 'How can you sleep at this hour?' Tema sprang to her feet. May you be well, O *honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Mother-in-law said to her daughter-in-law.

'O Tema, listen to what I say.'¹⁸...*ra...ji...*

'This is not an hour to sleep.

This is not an hour to sleep.'

'Adorn yourself suitably, O Tema.

Adorn yourself suitably.'

'Pick a necklace that suits you best.

Pick a necklace that suits you best.'

'Put a beauty spot on your forehead.

Put a beauty spot on your forehead.'

'Wear a sari that suits you best.

Wear a sari that suits you best.'

'Choose a blouse that enhances your figure.

Choose a blouse that enhances your figure.'



Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conversed.
They engaged in talk.

‘O daughter-in-law, we must go to fetch water.
We must go to fetch water.’

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

One fine day Alkhu chided Tema, ‘O daughter-in-law, how can you succumb to sleep at this hour? Wake up instantly.’ The daughter-in-law was quick to get on her feet. She lighted lamps in every niche. *O maharaj!* In beautiful finery she was bedecked. She put on a pretty skirt and tied her hair with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that looked well on her, and picked a necklace that suited her best. Pearls sparkled in her locks. *O maharaj!* She was clad in a sari that looked good on her. Alkhu said, ‘O daughter-in-law, there isn’t much water in the house. Let us go and fetch some water from the step-well close by. They hitched high their pitchers brought from Kashi. They placed them atop the indhoni made of marva stalks. They set off to fetch water, cool and fresh. *O maharaj!* Look, they go together to fetch water! May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Sasu and *vahu* went to fetch water.

They went to fetch water.

‘O daughter-in-law, listen to what I say.’

‘Let us put to test the prowess of our brothers.

Let us put to test the prowess of our brothers.

Our brothers’ valour should be put to test.’

Tema said to her mother-in-law,

She said to her mother-in-law,

‘Listen to what I say.’

‘Let us not sow seeds of quarrel.

Let us not sow seeds of quarrel.

Such moves lead to quarrels.’



(Tambur) O maharaj!

Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law set out to fetch water. They walked through the alleyways and lanes. *O maharaj!* They talked about various matters. Alkhu said, 'O daughter-in-law, we'll go to the glistening green garden to clean our teeth. We'll cut branches of the kaniyor tree.' *O maharaj!* They went to the glistening green garden. They cut sticks of the kaniyor tree. *(Tambur)* They made datans from the fresh kaniyor sticks. As they went along, they cleansed their teeth with datan. Chatting and cleaning, they walked. Alkhu said, 'O daughter-in-law, let us put our brothers' prowess to test. We'll use this datan to measure their worth. We'll learn whose brothers are worthy and whose brothers are lesser in respect. Let the prowess of our folks be appraised.' Tema's heart sank at the suggestion. She said, 'O mother-in-law, we mustn't do so. We cannot fathom the outcome of such a proposition.' *Khama!*

The old woman said to her daughter-in-law,
The old woman said to her daughter-in-law,
'We must assess our brothers' prowess.'

'We'll find whose brothers are valiant and worthy.
We'll find whose brothers are valiant and worthy.
And whose brothers are lesser in respect.'

They reached the lake as they talked.
They reached the lake as they talked.
At the boundary of the well they stopped.

Tema said to her mother-in-law,
She said to her mother-in-law.
'Listen to what I say.'

'We mustn't speak of testing our brothers, O mother-in-law.
We mustn't speak of testing our brothers.
Let us not dwell on such thoughts.'

'We'll split the datan into two, O daughter-in-law.



We'll split the datan into two.

We'll use the datan to test the valour of our brothers.'

(Tambur) *O maharaj!*

Alkhu and Tema cut fresh thin sticks from the branches of the *kaniyor* tree. They cleaned their teeth as they walked. Mother-in-law said, 'O daughter-in-law, let us amuse ourselves. Listen to what I say. We shall put to test our brothers' prowess. We'll assess whose brothers are valiant and worthy and whose brothers are slight and petty. We'll measure their worth by using datan sticks.' *O maharaj!* The daughter-in-law said meekly, 'O mother-in-law, may our siblings prosper in peace. We shall talk about a hundred different things but we mustn't question the worth of our siblings. Why should we test their worthiness?' But Alkhu was adamant, 'O my daughter-in-law, we'll tear the datan into two, and fling both halves on the ground in turns. If they fall the right side up, one's brothers will be considered to be sound. If they fall flat with their face down, their worthiness should be suspected.' 'O mother-in-law,' replied Tema, 'This will cause a conflict. Why do you wish to fan the flame of feud?'

In the meantime, they reached the lake. They placed their indhonis and pitchers on the ground. Alkhu said once again, 'O daughter-in-law, we'll tear the datan into two and use the sticks to measure the prowess of our siblings. We'll scrap our tongue with the splits. If one's brothers are worthy, milk will seep from one's mouth. But trickles of spittle will ooze out if they are undeserving. If they fall the right side up, one's brothers will be considered sound. Flat and face down if they fall, one's brothers will be regarded as worthless.' Tema pondered for a while. 'Ill is done in the world,' she said. 'Please do not sow seeds of quarrel.' 'How dare you disobey me?' chided the old woman with disdain. 'Alright, I'll do as you say, but please don't go back on your words, O mother-in-law,' the younger woman retorted. Such wenches should be confined to hell. For no reason do they fan fire. First they invite trouble for themselves and then they drag others in with them. *O maharaj!* Such women do not live



in peace, nor allow others to be at peace. Alkhu and Tema's brothers dwelled in a far-off land but this foolish old woman wrought their ruination.

O maharaj! The mother-in-law shredded her datan first but her mouth was filled with spittle. As she flung the shreds onto the ground, they landed face down. *O maharaj!* She stood ashen faced and said wryly, 'Luck has forsaken me, the shreds fell the wrong way. Why Tema, it's your turn now and I'm eager to know your plight.' *O maharaj!* Tema shredded the datan apart. On scrapping the tongue, milk oozed out. When flung, they fell to the ground with their right side upward. Beating her breasts, Tema's mother-in-law cursed aloud, 'O you stealthy harlot, you belong to a low-bred family. Your brothers are abject and ill-bred, whereas mine are the great rulers of Virat Nagar. Suro and Sajmol are my brothers. The land trembles under their mighty feet. Your siblings are ill-famed fugitives. They steal stray buffaloes. They're petty and vain. They are lesser in every respect. They are infamous rogues!' Thus she cursed and quarreled. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Alkhu picked a quarrel.

She picked a quarrel.

The wicked woman picked a quarrel.

'May you be confined to hell, O daughter-in-law.

May you be confined to hell.

Your folks are low bred.'

'Listen to what I say, O daughter-in-law.

Listen to what I say.

I'll tell you my heart's desire.'

(Tambur) O maharaj!

On an auspicious day, the narrator narrates a story and the entire court listens. Chando and Pabu, the Rathors princes, caused great havoc at a narrow pass. They blocked the pathway across the mountain. Chando traced a *Dhula no pat* on the ground. How he



set the Dhula no pat! In the place of sages, four-and-eighty warriors joined him. He held a fierce vermillion-coloured spear in the place of a tambur. He sang bhajans. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Chando and Pabu caused devastation at the narrow pass. Chando wielded his spear. He barricaded the narrow path. One day, Lakho Vanjharo, the merchant-chief, came with his caravan. The bullocks were coaxed and led in. Chando and the merchant-chief had a scuffle.

O maharaj! Weighing his spear, Chando pounced upon the merchant chief. Lakho was sliced in one clear stroke. He fell on the ground. And how Chando bellowed! *Khama (Tambur)* Chando killed the merchant-chief and called aloud, ‘O herdsmen, don’t be afraid. You mustn’t try to run away. Try to do so at your life’s peril. But if you agree to work for me, I’ll double your wages. Mind you, if you try to escape, your life will be at stake.’ The words of the brave are feared and obeyed. *O maharaj!* The words of a valiant are always honoured. The herdsmen, poor and helpless, quivered like dry leaves. They conversed among themselves, ‘O brothers! Don’t try to escape. We toil to fill our bellies. Why should we invite premature death?’ *O maharaj!* At Chando’s bidding, a hundred-and-forty herdsmen urged their bullocks to proceed. (*Tambur*) Chando raided the merchant caravan. He seized the cart load of diamond and gold. The bullocks were laden with pearls and precious stones. The herdsmen led away their bullocks at Chando’s command. Chando and Pabu mounted their horses. Sporting on their horses, they rode at the front of the caravan. Clouds of dust arose as they passed. Lakha’s caravan was led out. Hurriedly, they tore the path. They arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

(*Tambur*) They came to Manek Chawk. Attendants of the Rathors emptied the cartload. The riches and treasure were heaped at Manek Chawk. The herdsmen led their bullocks to the grazing ground in Jhenjhanian. And the Rathors conversed among themselves.

Pabuji spoke aloud,
He spoke aloud,
‘O brothers, listen to what I say.’



‘Listen to what I say, O Chando.

Listen to what I say.

I’ll share with you my heart’s desire.’

‘There is no time for delay, O brother.

There is no time for delay.

We should take timely action.’

On his feet Chando fastened costly footwear.

On his feet he fastened costly footwear.

He went out wearing fine footwear.

Chando moved swiftly.

Chando moved swiftly.

He moved swiftly.

Hurriedly, he tore along the path.

To a bania’s shop he went.

To a bania’s shop he went.

He went to a bania’s shop.

Clothes with golden lace he bought.

Clothes with golden lace he bought.

He bought clothes lined with gold.

He bought clothes lined with gold.

He bought costly attire from a bania’s shop.

From the bania’s place he came back.

From the bania’s place he came back.

Towards a goldsmith’s shop he bustled.

A goldsmith’s shop he visited.

A goldsmith’s shop he visited.

He went to a goldsmith’s shop.

‘O brother, listen to what I say.

Listen to what I say.

I’ll share with you my heart’s desire.’



‘Prepare adornments befitting a groom, O brother.

Prepare adornments befitting a groom.

There is no time for delay.’

The goldsmith prepared befitting adornments.

He prepared befitting adornments.

He made a splendid array of the adornments.

Jeevta!

(*Tambur*) The Rathors conversed among themselves. Pabu, the crown prince, said, ‘O Chando, there is no time for delay. We should take timely action or we’ll be late. O Chando, go to the marketplace. You must visit the bania’s shop. Buy some clothes with gold lace. From there go to the tailor. Get the cloth stitched in an elegant style. There is no time for delay.’ *O maharaj!* Thus spoke Pabu, and Chando set off immediately. (*Tambur*) He went straight to the market. ‘O bania, my brother, please make haste. Show me some cloths with golden lace.’ The bania showed him varieties of cloth laced with gold. Chando, the Rathor, chose an expensive cloth. From there, he headed for the tailor’s shop. ‘O tailor, my brother, make haste. This is not a time to delay. Sew the clothes to befit a groom.’ The tailor set down to stitch the cloth. *O maharaj!* This is a tale of virtuous people.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The tailor stitched clothes for Chando and Pabu. He also sewed clothes for Huro, Buro and the other brothers. The Rathors looked elegant and winsome in their new attire. Pabu said after a while, ‘O Chando, there is no time for delay. Timely action is needed. Walk around the town. Invite one and all. Call the tailors, the cobblers, the dancers and the singers. Invite the sweepers and cleaners. Everyone should be invited. Fasten the saddles and tighten the stirrups of our horses. Get the elephants ready for the journey. We’ll go to Jhayeria with a *mamera* for Tema. Our *vevan* does not consider us as her equal. She has spoken insulting words about us. But now we’ll go to her kingdom with pomp and splendour. We’ll be served the customary dish of *lapsi*. We’ll return after relishing the



sweet.' *O maharaj!* Chando Rathor picked a long bamboo staff. He put on gold-encrusted footwear. Hurriedly, he tore the path. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Chando invited one and all.

He invited one and all.

Everyone in Gadh Gujhanian was called.

Chando visited every household.

He went to every household.

'O brothers, listen to what I say,' he said.

'With the mamera of our sister, we'll go, O brothers.

With the mamera of our sister, we'll go.

We'll all go to perform her mamera ceremony.'

Chando called upon one and all.

He called upon one and all.

He set out to invite the people of Gadh Gujhanian.

Chando returned home.

He returned home.

After inviting everyone, he returned home.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Chando, the Rathor, set off quickly. He called upon the people of Gadh Gujhanian. 'O brothers, there is no time for delay. Make haste. Come at dawn. O, tailors and cobblers, dancers and singers, none should be left behind. We'll go to Jhayeria with Tema's mamera. We'll relish the customary dish of *lapsi*. *O maharaj!* (An accompanist: *Jeevta!*) (*Tambur*) Chando returned to the palace of clouds. Tossing and turning, he spent the night. With the waking cock's crowing, the day broke. The first streak of light brightened the sky. Everyone sprang out of their beds. They took earthen pitchers in their hands. They made for the forest to answer the call of nature. They cut sticks of kaniyor for their datan. *O maharaj!* They cleaned their teeth and rinsed their mouths. They washed their arms and legs. They offered prayers to the rising sun. They respectfully recalled



their parents' names. *O maharaj!* Thus the Rathors busied themselves to prepare for their journey.

The Rathors adorned themselves in their finery.
 They adorned themselves in their finery.
 They decorated themselves with befitting jewellery.

The Rathors put on splendid garments.
 They put on splendid garments.
 In groom's attire they appeared to be dressed.

The Rathors were decked in gold and silver.
 They were decked in gold and silver.
 Gold and silver ornaments glittered on them.

The Rathori turban,
 The Rathori turban,
 They tied Rathori turbans.

Born on the same night,
 Born on the same night,
 The Rathors were a family of six siblings.

The rising sun,
 The rising sun,
 The rising sun looked pale in their presence.

They looked very winsome.
 They looked very winsome.
 They looked brighter than sunbeams.

The Rathors twirled their moustaches.
 They twirled their moustaches.
 The tapering ends of moustaches touched their eyes.

The Rathors were the pride of the land.
 They were the pride of the land.
 Their bravery was matchless.



But when the lords will die,
When the lords will die,
People will be struck numb.

Long live the Rathors.

Long live the Rathors.

May the mother who bore them be hale and hearty.

Pabu was the son of an apsara.

Pabu was the son of an apsara.

May his mother live hale and hearty.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The Rathors adorned themselves in various ways. They draped dhotis with golden lace. They dressed in a groom's finery. They tied the Rathori turban in style. They put on fine jewellery. They were decked in gold and silver ornaments. They looked brighter than sunbeams. A family of six siblings, how alike they look! Long live the Rathors, the sons of an apsara! Chando and Pabu were born to an apsara. Huro and Buro, Ubo and Dhebo were the sons of Queen Morchang. O mother, give birth to worthy sons, sons who shine like diamonds, or your motherhood will be a waste. The Rathors were the pride of the land. They were the tigers of their kingdom.

O maharaj! Just as a tree symbolises protection and shelter, bravery embodies substance. The loss of the brave leaves people dumb-struck and aghast. (*Tambur*) The valiant die only once. This is a tale of bravery and courage. Everyone will mourn the fall of the lords. One's life is wasted when one is not honoured by one's kin, one is not considered virtuous and is denied recognition. Such people are better dead than alive. They lead a life of obscurity. But when a valiant person dies, his kith and kin cry, his uncles and brothers shed tears of blood, his folks lament, and the womenfolk beat their breasts in grief. Only such gallant and praiseworthy people should flourish. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The Rathors adorned themselves in various ways. Even the rising sun looked pale in their presence. They adorned themselves in a groom's finery. They were up and awake early. They



called upon the horse keeper, 'This is not a time to delay.' The keeper harnessed the horses. He quickly tightened the stirrups. Long loose reins were fastened to the bridles. *O maharaj!* A string of jingling bells was attached to their feet. The gold and silver harness glittered.

(*Tambur*) All the brave warriors gathered at Manek Chawk. Chando said, 'O chieftains and courtiers, there is no time for delay. We should take timely action. Load your bullocks quickly with diamonds and emeralds.' The bullocks were loaded. They hurried along the road. *O maharaj!* Clouds of dust arose as they passed by. A mantle of dust covered the hills on either side of the road. Rapidly, they tore their way. The cart-men coaxed their bullocks. Chando and Pabu led the way on horseback. The elephants and camels followed their trail. Together they rode towards Jhayeria for Tema's mamera. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. *Khama!*

¹⁹The Rathors trotted on horseback.

They trotted on horseback...*ra...ji...*

Even the rising sun looked pale in their presence.

Even the rising sun looked pale in their presence.

They looked brighter than the sunbeams.

The Rathors set off for the mamera.

Clouds of dust arose as they passed.

Clouds of dust arose as they passed.

They arrived at the place where the nobles lived.

They arrived at the place where the nobles lived.

They arrived in Jhayeria.

They arrived in Jhayeria.

In the glistening green garden,

They disembarked in the glistening green garden.

The Rathors camped in the garden.

In the glistening green garden they pitched their tents.



(Tambur) *O maharaj!*

Hurriedly, they tore the path. They arrived at the outskirts of Jhayeria. They camped in the glistening green garden and waited for their relatives. *O maharaj!* As the sun descended on the other side of the hill, darkness swallowed the earth. The parakeets flew back to their nests. Sleep engulfed the world. The Rathors were in deep slumber. They spent the night in the glistening green garden. The waking cock's crowing heralded the day. The first streak of light brightened the sky. Everyone sprang from their bed. They held earthen pitchers in their hands. They made for the jungle to answer the call of nature. They cut thin sticks of kaniyor to use as datan. *O maharaj!* They cleaned their teeth while strolling in the garden. Meanwhile, a *malan* was busy adorning herself.

A malan adorned herself in many ways.

She adorned herself in many ways.

In many ways she made herself attractive.

The malan put on a befitting skirt.

She put on a befitting skirt.

She chose a blouse that looked well on her.

Pearls sparkled in her locks.

Pearls sparkled in her locks.

She was clad in a sari that suited her best.

A golden basket she held.

A golden basket she held.

She took a silver hook in her hand.

She came to the glistening green garden.

She came to the glistening green garden.

She went inside the lush green garden.

She plucked the flowers.

She plucked the flowers.

With the silver hook, she plucked them.



Chando was cleaning his teeth.
 He was cleaning his teeth.
 With a datan he was cleaning his teeth.
 Chando spoke to the malan,
 He spoke to the malan,
 'O sister, listen to what I say.'
 'Why have you come here, O sister?
 Why have you come here?
 What has brought you here?'
 'I've come to pluck flowers, O king.
 I've come to pluck flowers.
 To collect some flowers, I've come.'
 'What will you do with the flowers, O malan?
 What will you do with the flowers?
 Why do you collect the flowers?'
 'I'll make a garland, O brother.
 I'll make a garland.
 I'll make a garland for Alkhu,' said the malan.
 'She pays me well.
 She pays me well.
 O brother, we live by selling flowers.'
 Coins of pure gold,
 Coins of pure gold,
 Chando gave the malan a handful of gold coins.
 The malan happily accepted the gift.
 She happily accepted the gift.
 She was pleased to receive the coins.

(Tambur) O brother, Chando Rathor ambled around in the glistening green garden, cleaning his teeth. *O maharaj!* A malan was busy adorning herself there. She donned a suitable skirt and tied her hair



with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that fitted her well and wore a necklace that suited her best. She smeared her eyes with streaks of black kohl. She was in full finery and splendour. She took a golden basket and a silver hook in her hand. She placed on her head an indhoni made of marva stalks. Her anklets jingled as she walked. She came to the marketplace. She walked with a sprightly gait. Her flowing strides seemed to reach out, as if she was walking across the earth. Her skin was of deep golden hue. It shone like a fresh flower in bloom. The biting eastern wind swept across her delicate face. She arrived in the glistening green garden. She walked around to pick flowers. She plucked them with the silver hook and gathered them in her golden basket. *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Chando spoke to her as she picked the flowers. ‘O sister, why have you come here so early? What will you do with these flowers?’ ‘I’ll make a garland, O brother,’ she said. ‘For whom do you make it, O sister?’ asked Chando. ‘I make it for Alkhu, the old queen. She gives generous rewards. We survive on her gifts. Only then are we able to feed our children.’

O maharaj! Chando, the Rathor, was a person of status. He would not engage in small and petty talk. He opened his moneybag and produced a handful of gold coins. He offered them to the malan. She tied them to a loose end of her clothing. She was gratified and pleased. ‘O brother, what do you want me to do?’ asked she. ‘O sister,’ said the Rathor, ‘go to Alkhu, the old one, and inform her that the Rathors have arrived. Tell her that we have arrived with the mamera of our sister. She mustn’t delay. We await a ceremonious reception at Suraj Pol. Tell our vevan that she must extend us a befitting welcome. Convey this message and come back.’ The malan put aside the flowers. She left her golden basket and silver hook behind and raced towards town. She arrived at the marketplace. She climbed the palace of clouds with hasty steps. *O maharaj!* She arrived at Alkhu’s palace and said, ‘O mother, this is a time to rejoice.’ Alkhu listened attentively. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.



Thus spoke the malan,
 Thus she spoke,
 'O mother, listen to what I say.'
 'I've some news for you, O mother.
 I've some news to break.
 I've brought some news from the glistening green garden.'
 'The Rathors have come for the mamera, O mother.
 They have come for the mamera.
 With much pomp they have arrived.'
 'It is an occasion to extend a welcome, O mother.
 It is time to extend a welcome.
 A warm reception we must extend.'
 'We must go to the outskirts, O mother.
 We must go to the outskirts.
 We should go and greet our guests.'
 Thus spoke Alkhu,
 Thus she said,
 'O maids, listen to what I say.'
 'We should welcome our guests, O maids.
 We should welcome our guests.
 We must go to Suraj Pol.'
 Alkhu wore ill-fitting attire.
 She wore ill-fitting attire.
 She made haste to welcome the guests.
 (An accompanist: She has engaged in mere talks. The lead
 singer: Yes, you said it well.)
 Rags and tatters she wore.
 Rags and tatters she wore.
 She looked disheveled in tattered clothes.



(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

Alkhu, the old woman, stretched in her bed. She sprang to her feet. She said to her maids, ‘O Lali and Phuli, Remli and Temli, O Thamku and Jhamku, O Lali and Lili, you must not delay. Get ready and come with me.’ She wore a broken necklace. She was clad in rags and shreds. *O maharaj!* She cast away the expensive sari she was wearing and donned a tattered piece of clothing. She wore a frayed blouse. She got dressed in a *jharkhu*. *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The Rathors were adorned finely. They offered prayers to the rising sun. They respectfully recalled their parents. *O maharaj!* The Rathors were draped in dhotis with golden lace. They had dressed up in a groom’s finery. They wore Rathori turbans in style. They looked elegant in fine jewellery. They looked brighter than sunbeams. *O maharaj!* The Rathors were adorned finely. They mounted their horses. Pabu, the crown prince, led the way. He rode the mare, Kesar Kalmi. Trotting on his mare, he came to Suraj Pol. Chando followed on his well-bred colt. Dhebo came after him, followed by Huro and Buro. They looked graceful and winsome! They looked brighter than sunbeams. The Rathors arrived at Suraj Pol. They stood in a straight line. *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) Alkhu vevan came to welcome them. She came with hasty steps. She was carrying a broken earthenware. *O maharaj!* She took *kanku* powder to make auspicious marks on the foreheads of the Rathors. The maids sang customary songs. But Alkhu had a wicked intention. Such whores should be condemned to hell. *O maharaj!* Pabu was striding on Kesar, the mare. He pondered, ‘O Lord! What is she up to? She has done ill in the world. We anticipated gifts of silver and gold. We looked forward to relishing the ceremonial dish of lapsi at her home. But our vevan is intriguing. Look, how she is dressed! This is inauspicious. What a way to slight one’s relatives!’ Pabu stepped forward. Their vevan, along with her attendants, arrived to welcome the Rathors. *O maharaj!* She held a platter in her hand. O look at her, how she behaves! She has dressed herself in the guise of a *jharkhu*. She put a red mark on the tail of Kesar, his mare. A wave of anger surged through Chando.



Alkhu put a mark on the mare's tail.

She put a mark on the mare's tail.

She put a mark on Pabu's neck.

Jeevta!

Thus spoke Chando,

Thus he spoke,

'O vevan, listen to what I say.'

'Why did you do so, O vevan?

Why did you do so?

Why did you put a mark on the mare's tail?'

'You have dishonoured our name, O vevan.

You have dishonoured our name.

You have put a red mark on Pabu's neck.'

'O vevan, you've done ill in the world.

You've done ill in the world.

You lack courtesy.'

Thus spoke Alkhu,

Thus she spoke,

'O Chando, listen to what I say.'

(An accompanist: *Khama!* The lead singer: *Khama!*)

'You've slain Lakha, the merchant chief, O Chando.

You've slain Lakha, the merchant chief.

You robbed and killed the merchant chief.'

'You steal stray buffalo, O Chando.

You steal stray buffalo.

You are a buffalo thief.'

'You have given dowry to Tema from stolen booty, O Chando.

You have given dowry to Tema from stolen booty.

From the stolen haul you've presented her gifts.'



‘Mind your tongue, O vevan.

Mind your tongue.

Your words are infuriating.’

‘Suro and Sajmol, O Chando,’ said Alkhu.

‘Suro and Sajmol,

They reign over Virat Nagar.’

‘Prove your valour by beheading them, O Chando.

Prove your valour by beheading them.

Bring their heads as evidence of your bravery.’

‘It will spark a feud, O Alkhu,’ said Chando.

‘It will spark a feud.

You’ve lured us into a difficult situation.’

‘We’ll square accounts with you, O Alkhu.

We’ll square accounts with you.

I’ll prove you wrong.’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

‘We came with cartloads of diamonds and jewels. We brought heaps of pearls and emeralds. We brought riches in abundance. But here you are, looking annoyed rather than pleased. You’ve humiliated us,’ said Chando. *O maharaj!* Alkhu said with contempt, ‘O Chando, turn around your horses. Don’t prattle with your small mouth.’ ‘O vevan, we are not ignoble and insignificant people. You called us worthless. My Pabuji is the pride of our land. But you dared to put an auspicious red mark on his neck. I would have strangled you to death and broken your skull open for this, but I restrain myself only because you are a woman. Must you humiliate us like this?’

O maharaj! Alkhu said, ‘O Chando, don’t prattle with your small mouth. Stains of Lakha’s blood reek your hands. You are the noted thieves of stray buffaloes. You need to learn to speak softly. Go back home. I’ll see who dares to strangle me! Who has the gall to break my skull? Knot your tongue and keep it inside your mouth. Don’t



be insolent.’ Thus they got into a row. Suraj Pol was now watchful. They had made a mistake. *O maharaj!* Chando said after a while, ‘O vevan, your words infuriate me. Keep your tongue in check. Why do you think that we are low born? We are the rulers of Gadh Gujhanian. We are the pride of the land. We reign as tigers. Why do you think of us as base and low?’

O maharaj! The vevan replied, ‘O Chando, you should not brag. You have held back the promised dowry. Your sister is deprived of her rights. You’ve given her trifles. You should rather shut up. Turn around your horses and return to your house and home.’ *O maharaj!* Chando said, ‘We came for an auspicious occasion but you’ve disgraced us. Mind your language, your words offend me. I’ll hurl you away to a distant land if you provoke me anymore. Why do you speak such bitter words?’

(*Tambur*) ‘O Chando, better not brag about your bravery,’ Alkhu said. ‘If you are valiant enough, go straight to Virat Nagar. But I have my doubts for you lack the courage to do so. Petty thieves of stray buffaloes, that’s what you are. Suro and Sajmol, my brother-duo, are dauntless warriors. Go to Virat Nagar and prove your valour by bringing their heads. If you can slash their heads, place them on a platter and bring along my sisters-in-law in a veiled carriage with the platter on their laps. Then alone shall I consider you worthy and valiant. I will extend a ceremonious reception to you on that day. I’ll mark your forehead with an auspicious vermilion mark and scatter *kumkum* and rice in your way.’

(*Tambur*) Such quarrelsome women should be damned. Alkhu caused the separation of adorable pairs. Such slimy whores should be banished to hell. Such a sly harlot should be condemned. O Alkhu, you lowly hog! *O maharaj!* The Rathors conversed among themselves. They twirled the tips of their moustaches. They stood astounded. Ill was done in the world. They pondered for a while, ‘How can our vevan think of such awful things? What would be the outcome of her suggestion?’ *O maharaj!* Alkhu, the wench, taunted the Rathors. *O maharaj!* Chando and Pabu, the Rathor princes,



turned around their horses. They returned to their glistening green garden. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The Rathors trod along.

They trod along.

Hastily, they tore the road.

They arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

They arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

They returned to Gadh Gujhanian.

‘Call one and all, O Chando,’ said Pabu.

‘Call one and all.

There is not time for delay.’

Chando invited one and all.

He invited one and all.

He called everyone in Gadh Gujhanian.

‘There is no time for delay, O brothers,’ said he.

‘This is not a time to delay.

We’ll meet at dawn.’

Green and yellow rugs,

Green and yellow rugs,

On green and yellow rugs they were all seated.

The chieftains gathered.

The chieftains gathered.

With a pointed spear the rugs were spread.

Opium-drinks were passed around.

Opium-drinks were passed around.

Opium-drinks were served generously.

There was great bustle.

There was great bustle.

The brave warriors conversed among themselves.



(Tambur) O maharaj!

One day an incident occurred. *(Tambur)* The Rathors set off for the mamera ceremony. They dreamt of enjoying the ceremonial feast of lapsi. But they were jeered at by their vevan. Disheartened and crestfallen, they returned to their glistening green garden. Pabu and Chando said, 'O herdsman, this is not a time to delay. Turn around your bullocks.' Clouds of dust arose as they went along. The surrounding trees and hills were shrouded in dust. *O maharaj!* The Rathors arrived in Gadh Gujhania. They conversed among themselves. The great Pabu spoke aloud, 'O Chandoji, there is no time for delay. One should have the support of one's kin.' *O maharaj!* 'Our kin are our strength. Go around town. Invite all our close relatives. We'll all gather before dawn. We'll haul Virat Nagar. This is not a time to delay.' The fortunate ones chatter while the others toil for them. Taking small strides, Chando went out hurriedly.

(Tambur) Chando invited one and all. He spoke aloud, 'O brothers, this is the time to prove our prowess. We will meet at sunrise and decide upon our future course of action. Please don't stay back at home.' *O maharaj!* He came back from the marketplace. He could not sleep a wink. He kept tossing and turning in bed. The waking cock's crowing heralded the day. The first streak of light brightened the sky. The chieftains gathered at the marketplace. Pabu spoke aloud, 'O chieftains, I implore you to listen to me. I'll share my personal feelings.' *O maharaj!* The chieftains listened attentively. 'O brothers, we must plunder Virat Nagar. We must prove our prowess in the battlefield. We'll bid farewell to our land. Either we'll come back victorious or we'll embrace death. Do not stay back in the shelter of your house. This is the time to prove our prowess.' *(Tambur)* Under the spell of liquor they all agreed.

O maharaj! How high were their spirits! 'This is not a time to delay. We shall go together and mount an attack,' under the spell of liquor, they shouted in unison. But they shrank away when the hour of action arrived. 'O brother, this is not possible. My wife is in pain. She may die if I don't stay by her side,' said one. 'My oxen need some



care. However I wish, I cannot leave them unattended,' said another. *O maharaj!* Numerous excuses they gave. Pabu and Chando waited for the chieftains to join them. But the chieftains didn't turn up. Pabu pondered for a while and said, 'O Chando, no one would willingly die for the sake of others. We mustn't rely on others. We must call upon our own blood. Blood is always thicker than water. O brothers, there is no time for delay.' Huro and Buro, Hebo and Dhebo, Pabu and Chando belonged to the same clan. *O maharaj!* They twirled the ends of their moustaches. They equipped themselves with arms.

Thus spoke Pabu Rathor,

Thus he spoke,

'O Chando, listen to what I say.'

'I implore you, listen to me, my brothers.

I implore you, listen to me.

Listen to my heart's desire.'

'Hold high your bows and arrows, O brothers.

Hold high your bows and arrows.

There is no time for delay.'

'Take out the horses, O Rathors.

Take out the horses.'

Hastily, they mounted their horses.

Long loose reins they held in their hands.

Long loose reins they held in their hands.

They fastened the long, loose reins to the bridles.

At the centre of the town,

At the centre of the town,

They mounted the horses at the centre of the town.

Trotting along on their horses,

Trotting along on their horses,

They set out.



They spread out rugs with the pointed tip of their spears.
 They spread out rugs with the pointed tip of their spears.
 Grey and white rugs were spread.

They sat on the rugs.
 They sat on the rugs.
 On the grey and white rugs they sat.

They prepared opium drink.
 They prepared opium drink.
 Opium drink was served generously.

The opium drink was passed around.
 The opium drink was passed around.
 From cupped palms they drank.

Thus spoke Pabu, the Rathor prince,
 Thus he spoke,
 ‘O brothers, I implore you, please listen to me.’

‘In an alien land we stand, O brothers.
 In an alien land we stand.
 We are in an unknown place.’

‘You must seek shelter, O Chando.
 You must seek shelter.
 Find us a safe place.’

Chando spoke to Pabu,
 Chando spoke to him,
 ‘O Pabuji, listen to what I say.’

‘From a noble clan we hail, O Pabuji.
 From a noble clan we hail.
 Such weak words will put us to shame.’

(Tambur)

Pabuji said, ‘We are six brothers. We won’t wait for the others. Move



swiftly, bring your horses from the stable and fasten their saddles. If we survive the battle, we'll return home. Our vevan has dishonoured our name. We must go to Virat Nagar.' *O maharaj!* They harnessed their horses. They fastened the saddles. They secured the long loose reins to the bridles. *O maharaj!* The Rathors picked their shields and swords. They held high their guns got from Bundikot and slung them across their shoulders. They sharpened the blades of their swords. *O maharaj!* They held the loose long reins of their horses and cracked the whip hard. (*Tambur*) The Rathors sported their horses as they travelled. *Khel khelan khalle khat.*²⁰

They headed for Virat Nagar. Clouds of dust arose as they passed. How imposing they seem as they travelled together in a group! They arrived at the outskirts of Virat Nagar. *O maharaj!* They sat under a paras pipal tree. Pabu said, 'O brothers, the midday sun is scorching hot. We must cool ourselves with opium drink. Dismount your horses and rest under a tree.' *O maharaj!* They sat on a rug. Opium drink was prepared. It was passed from hand to hand. (*Tambur*) Pabu spoke after having a couple of rounds, 'We are in an alien land. We are complete strangers. O Chandoji, you must seek shelter. Go and survey the landscape. Find a place where we can retreat when necessary.' *O maharaj!* Pabu, the brave, spoke such words. 'O elder brother, why do you utter such petty words? Why do you think of withdrawing?' Chando said. 'O Chandoji, we are strangers in this place. We have come to plunder an unknown land.' While the valiant would brace themselves for war, the cowards would back away giving excuses. The words of the valiant are always honoured. The words of a coward carry no weight.

O maharaj! Chando mounted his horse. He took the rein in his hands. He roamed the outskirts. He watched the people frequenting the pass. He scanned the landscape. He looked for a spot from where they could mount an attack and also a place to take refuge. 'It's unwise to attack an unknown place. We don't want to invite trouble,' he thought. He called Dhebo and said, 'O Dheboji, go over that hillock. You'll have a better view from there. Watch over Virat Nagar and report back to us.'



Dhebo went up the hilltop.
 He went up the hilltop.
 He climbed to the top.
 He scrambled up a *saragva* tree.
 He scrambled up a *saragva* tree.
 Breathing hard, he sat upon the top branch.
 Pabu and his brothers stood barring the way.
 They stood barring the way.
 They blocked the way to Virat Nagar.
 As the day broke,
 As the day broke,
 Streaks of light brightened the sky.
 A herdsman with a herd of camel stepped out.
 A herdsman with a herd of camel stepped out.
 Soon a herd of camel was in sight.
 The camels of Suro and Sajmol,
 The camels of Suro and Sajmol,
 By hundreds they came.
 Clouds of dust arose as they passed by,
 Clouds of dust arose as they passed by.
 Raising puffs of dust they went by.
 A herdsman walked behind the camels.
 He walked behind the camels.
 He led out the camels from Virat Nagar.

O maharaj!

Chando said, 'O Dheboji, climb the hillock nearby. Be vigilant. The camels of Suro and Sajmol will come this way. You must watch them closely. See the route they take. We shall go to the narrow pass. We'll block the road to town.' *O maharaj!* Dhebo, the Rathor, climbed the hillock. He sat atop a tall *saragva* tree. (*Tambur*) He watched the



surroundings. *O maharaj!* He scouted the land from the tree top. Chando and Pabu blocked the narrow path. They spread tasseled rugs on the road. They sat upright on the rugs. *O maharaj!* The morning sun was up in the sky. A herd of camels came that way. The herdsman led them outside the town. Clouds of dust arose as they came. *O maharaj!* Dhebo sat under the open sky. The camels came in hundreds. The hillock was shrouded in layers of dust. Specks of dust settled everywhere. Dhebo's vision blurred. The sun rose up in the sky. The herdsman came within sight. A hundred and twenty-five camel-calves followed him. As he walked, he spun a rope on a large spinning wheel. He held a huge bamboo staff under his arm. He advanced like a towering hillock. Dhebo Rathor watched intently, 'Who's this hill-like figure following the herd?' he thought, 'A mistake has been made. Which animal is this, so huge and large? There is no escape for me.' Overwhelmed with intense fear, he began to shiver violently. A chill ran down his spine and tremors rattled his bones.

'From where has this herdsman appeared?' wondered Dhebo.

'From where has this herdsman appeared?

To which place does he belong?'

The herdsman came with a herd of camels.

He came with a herd of camels.

Under his arm he held a bamboo staff.

Like a towering hillock, he advanced.

Like a towering hillock, he advanced.

His enormous body lumbered leisurely.

Dhebo trembled like a dead leaf.

He trembled like a withered leaf.

Terror-stricken, he felt feverish.

He scrambled down the saragva tree.

He scrambled down the saragva tree.

He fell off as he descended.

'Listen to what I say, O brothers,' said Dhebo.



'Listen to what I say.
Difficult times lie ahead.'

'Which animal could that be, O brothers.
Which animal could that be?
It is so huge and massive!'

(*Tambur*) 'O brothers,' Dhebo became feverish. He trembled like a withered leaf. *O maharaj!* He pondered for a while, 'The camels come by hundreds. But who follows them? I will surely be killed if this colossal figure catches sight of me.' Dhebo scrambled down the tree with caution. He fell off as he descended. Badly was he scraped and cut. He ran for his life. *O maharaj!* He raced down the hillock. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) He ran to Chando and Pabu. He stammered as he spoke, 'O brothers, we've made a mistake. A herd of camels is set free. A hillock-like figure follows the herd. We must run to save our lives.'

O maharaj! Chando and Pabu pondered for a while, 'O Dheboji, don't lose heart. The towering figure must be the herdsman, the keeper of the camel. Strange that you tremble so profusely at his very sight. Keep your cool and be calm. There is no cause for fear.' But Dhebo continued to tremble like a withered leaf. (*Tambur*) He said to Pabuji, 'O Pabuji, we've done ill in the world. If the keeper of the camels is so massive, how strong would be his masters? We are sure to die at their hands. We should leave this place at the earliest.' Chando and Pabu pondered for a while. Pabu said, 'O Chandoji, we don't stand a chance. Let us turn around our horses. We'll wait for a better opportunity.' *O maharaj!* The Rathors mounted their horses and took the reins in their hands. They returned to Gadh Gujhania. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Immediately, the Rathors returned to their kingdom.
Immediately, they returned to their kingdom.
They came riding on their horses.
Thus spoke Pabuji,
Thus he spoke,



‘Chandoji, listen to what I say.’

‘This is a time to prove our prowess, O brother.

This is a time to prove our prowess.

We should be true to our words.’

‘We belong to a noble clan, O brother.

We belong to a noble clan.

From an honourable family we hail.’

They were the pride of their land.

They were the pride of their land.

They were the sons of Hirapath.

Sons of an apsara,

Sons of an apsara,

May their mother live hale and hearty.

They cleaned their teeth and rinsed their mouths.

They cleaned their teeth and rinsed their mouths.

They finished their morning ablutions.

They offered prayers to the rising sun.

They offered prayers to the rising sun.

All their brothers and cousins joined the prayers.

Chando worshipped the Lord.

Chando worshipped the Lord.

He offered whiffs of gugal to the sacred fire.

They invoked the deities.

They invoked the deities.

Their family gods and guardian deities were invoked.

They paid respect to their ancestors.

They paid respect to their ancestors.

Respectfully, they recited their names.

They invoked the deities.



They invoked the deities.

They invoked Khetlo, the God of fields and farms.

‘Reside on the blades of our swords, O Khetlo.

Reside on the blades of our swords.’

Thus they invoked the God.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Pabu said, ‘O Chandoji, we’ve made a mistake. We have tarnished our reputation. We must prove our prowess. We should be true to our words. We’ll wake up early tomorrow morning and set off to plunder Virat Nagar.’ The Rathors could not sleep a wink. They kept tossing and turning in their beds. Early next day, as the first streak of light brightened the sky, rubbing their eyes, they sat up. *O maharaj!* How fervently they prayed! Pabuji said, ‘O brothers, we will pay homage to our family deity. Then we’ll set out to plunder Virat Nagar.’ They offered whiffs of gugal incense to the deities, and blew a conch shell. Pabu sounded the gongs as worship. He offered *arati*. They worshipped with deep faith. They invoked Khetlo, the protecting deity of the farm and fields. ‘O God, we beseech you to be with us. O God, please reside on the tip of our spears and swords. We seek to plunder Virat Nagar. We will look straight into death’s eye.’ Then they entreated Mother Chamunda, ‘O Mother, please be on our side. Reside on the tips of our swords and spear. We wish to plunder Virat Nagar. We’ll return only after winning the battle.’

‘On the tips of our swords and spears please reside, O Goddess
Chamunda.

On the tips of our swords and spear, please reside.

O Mother, please be on our side.’

‘We’ll go to Virat Nagar, O Mother.

We’ll go to Virat Nagar.

We’ll plunder Virat Nagar.’

‘To the guardian deity of Gadh Gujhania,

To the guardian deity of Gadh Gujhania,



We pay our obeisance to you, O Khetlo, our God.'

'Saddle your horse,' said Pabu.

'Saddle your horse.'

Chando harnessed the horses with care.

(An accompanist: *Khama!* My Lord! *Khama!*)

The Rathors sharpened the blades of their swords.

They sharpened the blades of their swords.

Their swords and spears, they sharpened.

Pabu and Chando,

Pabu and Chando,

They mounted their horses in haste.

They made for the outskirts.

They made for the outskirts.

From Manek Chawak they set off.

Clouds of dust arose as they went.

Clouds of dust arose as they went.

They went raising puffs of dust along the way.

Longing for blood,

Longing for blood,

They tore the way to Virat Nagar.

The Rathors arrived at Virat Nagar.

They arrived at Virat Nagar.

On the outskirts of Virat Nagar they arrived.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The Rathors offered whiffs of gugal to the deities. They invoked Goddess Bhavani. 'O Mother Bhavani, please reside on the tips of our spears and swords. You are our protector. We seek your blessings.' Chando invoked the deities and made numerous offerings. 'O Mother, please bless us. Ensure that we return victorious. We will bring as prize, the heads of Suro and Sajmol. We'll fetch their queens in veiled carriages. We'll ask for the customary welcome



from our vevan. If our enemy is vanquished, we will offer you a sacrifice of two male buffaloes. O Goddess, please be on our side.'

O maharaj! The Rathors harnessed their horses. They quickly tightened the stirrups. The long loose reins were fastened to the bridles. *(Tambur)* *O maharaj!* They sharpened the blades of their swords. They held high the guns brought from the land of Bundikot. They mounted their horses in one swift movement. Pabu rode on Kesar Kalmi, the mare. Chando mounted his well-bred colt. They took the long, loose reins in their hands. Harder than ever before, they cracked their whips. The horses jolted into a run. They halted for a while at Manek Chawk. They went through the alleyways and lanes. Gadh Gujhanian was left behind. They trotted along the way to Virat Nagar.

(Tambur) Clouds of dust arose as their horses galloped by. They came to a paras pipal tree. Pabu said, 'O Chandoji, it is now time to have a round of opium-drink. Pull the reins of your horse. We shall cool off for a while before resuming our journey.' This is a tale of valiant people. This is a tale of the brave Rathors. The Rathors dismounted their horses. Rugs were spread with the pointed tips of their spears. They sat upright on the green and yellow rugs. They prepared the opium-drinks and cupped their palms to drink. Pabu said, 'O Chandoji, please venture out and survey the landscape. How should we plan the course of action?' Chando replied, 'O elder brother, why do you say such trivial things? Once earlier we returned empty-handed. This time we will not retreat, come what may. Either our enemy will suffer the throes of death or we'll die at their hands. We'll slay the heads of our enemy and on a platter, take them with us. Only then will we be called the valiant lords of Gadh Gujhanian.' They mounted their horses in a single leap. They stood barring the way. *Khama!*

As the day broke,
As the day broke,
Streaks of light brightened the sky.



A herdsman with a herd of camels came that way.
 A herdsman with a herd of camels came that way.
 Soon a herd of camels was in sight.

The camels of Suro and Sajmol,
 The camels of Suro and Sajmol,
 In hundreds they came.

Clouds of dust arose as they passed by.
 Clouds of dust arose as they passed by.
 Clouds of dust arose as they traversed the path.

A herdsman walked behind the camels.
 He walked behind the camels.
 He led the camels out from Virat Nagar.

Like a well head stone,
 Like a well head stone,
 He was as massive and huge as a well head stone.

He came with a herd of camels.
 He came with a herd of camels.
 Under his arm he held a bamboo shaft.

Like a towering hillock he advanced.
 Like a towering hillock he advanced.
 Like a huge hillock he loomed large.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Clouds of dust arose as the herd of camels of Suro and Sajmol came along. The herds of Sajmol's camels caused a storm. The herdsman walked stoutly behind them. A huge leather-bag, filled with water, was slung across his shoulder. He held a bamboo-shaft under his arm. He spun a rope on his spinning wheel as he walked. He coaxed and caressed the camels. He advanced like a towering hillock. (*Tambur*) Hurriedly, he tore the path.

O maharaj! He arrived at the outskirts. Pabu and Chando watched him come. 'We were awed to see him on our previous visit. But we shall now take him to task.' *O maharaj!* As the herdsman approached



nearer, the Rathors stopped him and asked, "Tell us the name of your master. To whom do these camels belong?" *O maharaj!* The herdsman replied, 'O brothers, these camels belong to Suro and Sajmol. They are my masters and kings.' Pabu and Chando said, 'We want to send them a word. Go and convey our message to them.' *Khama! O maharaj!* Rayko, the herdsman said, 'O brothers, I can't leave my camels unattended.' 'We'll tend your camels for a while. You must carry our message,' Chando said. Rayko replied, 'Why don't you go and convey your message yourself? I would not oblige anyone for such a chore.' *O maharaj!* Chando was annoyed by Rayko's words. He bashed the herdsman and struck off his ears and nose.

At the court of Virat Nagar,
At the court of Virat Nagar,
Courtly matters were being discussed.

Opium drinks were being served generously.
Opium drinks were being served generously.
Opium drinks were being served.

Tales of bravery were being related.
Tales of bravery were being related.
Courtly matters were being discussed.

Steaks of goat-meat were being served.
Steaks of goat-meat were being served.
Sumptuous meat was being served.

Shouting and lamenting,
Shouting and lamenting,
Whining and whimpering the herdsman came.

The herdsman wept and wailed.
He wept and wailed.
He rushed straight inside the court.

The herdsman arrived at the assembly room.
He arrived at the assembly room.



Inside the royal court he barged.
 The herdsman stood still inside the court.
 He stood still inside the court.
 Suro and Sajmol spoke to him.
 'Why have you come here, O herdsman?
 Why have you come here?
 Tell us, what brings you to us at this hour?'

'Ill has been done in the world, O king,' said Rayko.
 'Ill has been done in the world.
 An evil incident has occurred.'

'My nose and ears are slashed, O king.
 My nose and ears are slashed.
 They led away our herd.'

Thus spoke the king,
 Thus he spoke,
 'O Rayko, listen to what I say.'

'Tell us the tale of your distress, O herdsman.
 Tell us the tale of your distress.
 Who has beaten and battered you?'

'The lords of Gadh Gujhanian, O king,
 The lords of Gadh Gujhanian,
 The Rathors of Gadh Gujhanian have assaulted me.'

'They drove away the herd, O lord.
 They drove away the herd.
 They've driven away our camels.'

'They have robbed us of our camels, O king.
 They have robbed us of our camels.
 The robbers came from Gadh Gujhanian.'

Suro and Sajmol,
 Suro and Sajmol,



Suro and Sajmol spoke aloud.

‘Listen to what we say, O chieftains.

Listen to what we say.

There is no time for delay.’

‘Make haste, pick up your arms.

Make haste, pick up your arms.’

The whole of Virat Nagar became alert.

Jeevta!

(*Tambur*) O *maharaj!* Chando and Pabu blocked the way. They stopped Rayko, the herdsman. His ears and nose were slashed. The Rathors said, ‘O Rayko, go to your kings. Go and tell them that the tigers of Gadh Gujhanian are on the prowl. Two lords of Gadh Gujhanian have waged a war. We await an encounter with them in the battlefield. We’ll drive away your herds. Convey our message and return swiftly.’ O *maharaj!* The nose of Rayko, the herdsman, was gashed. His ears were slashed. He wept and wailed, whined and whimpered. O, how he cried in pain! He raced homewards. He ran towards Virat Nagar. Suro and Sajmol, the rulers of Virat Nagar, were seated in their court. (*Tambur*) The hookahs were filled with the best hemp. Rounds of opium-drink were passed. Sumptuous steaks of goat-meat were being served. Courtly matters were being discussed. The best liquor passed hands. The courtiers were in their best spirits. Weeping and lamenting, the herdsman entered. He arrived at the king’s court. He collapsed at his feet. Screaming, he rolled on the ground.

O *maharaj!* The chieftains sprang to their feet. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) They asked the herdsman, ‘O Rayko, who has beaten and battered you? Tell us the tale of your woe.’ The courtiers became attentive and alert. They asked the herdsman to relate his tale. The herdsman replied, ‘O lords, our offenders belong to Gadh Gujhanian. They struck off my ears and nose. They drew away all our hundred and twenty-five camels. Chando and Pabu have sent you a message. They await an encounter with you at the outskirts of the town. The



millers and cobblers, dancers and singers should be prepared for war. Everyone should come to rescue the camels.'

O maharaj! Suro and Sajmol pondered for a while, 'O chieftains, there is no time for delay. Strangers have plundered our land. Call out for one and all. Gather them by beating the drums.' The war drums were sounded. The drum beats resounded in the whole of Virat Nagar. War cries rent the air. People became alert and agile. Store-keepers and clerks, the traders and millers, cobblers and potters, dancers and singers, the tillers of the farm, all sprang to their feet. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) They held high their swords and shields. They took with them silver studded guns. They held high their fiery spears. On hearing the sound of the war-drums, everyone came together. Trumpets and conches blared, the roll of drums crackled like thunder in the lanes. The army swarmed outside the town. *Khama.* (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* People thronged the alleyways. The air was thick with war-cries. 'O brothers, there is no time for delay. This is a time to brace oneself. This is the time to prove our prowess. Besiege our enemy. They should not remain alive. These strangers have plundered our land. Our herdsman is assaulted. Chando and Pabu shouldn't be left to live.'

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The kings of Virat Nagar led out their army. In the wilderness they arrived. They called upon a barber, 'O barber, be our spy. Go to Pabu and Chando and assess their strength.' *O maharaj!* The barber went to the outskirts. 'O Rathors, you've come to our town, may you be blessed. But you will not return alive. Why have you plundered our land? What is the strength of your army? The people of Virat Nagar have thronged the town. They thirst for your lives. You will be killed.' Pabu and Chando replied, 'O barber, you are like a brother. Inform your king that we have come here to embrace death. We do not wish to go back alive. We don't mean to cause any offence. We don't intend to cause any harm to the people of your town. We want to die at your king's hand. But who will witness your king's bravery? Only those who are present at the spot will witness our death. The others will not come to know anything about the battle. Do as we say. Call upon the people of Virat Nagar,



one and all. The queens too should remain present. The queens of Suro and Sajmol should see us die. Convey this message to your kings.'

O maharaj! The barber trod along the way. He went straight to his masters. He said to Suro and Sajmol, 'O lords, our enemies have come unaided. Chando and Pabu, the brother-duo has come alone. They wish to die at your hands. They have asked you to invite one and all to see the spectacle. None of our subjects should remain indoors. Our enemies should be slain in front of all the town people.' The kings pondered for a while, 'We should be happy to oblige them. O chieftains, move swiftly. Call all the people in town, one and all. They must watch our bravery in the battlefield. They should remain present to see our enemy die. Call upon the queens. They should see our brave exploits. *O maharaj!* The chieftains hurried to carry out the task. They called upon the people and the queens. 'A war has been declared against the raiders. Pabu and Chando will be slain on the battlefield. Everyone should remain present to witness their fall.' *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* People gathered to watch the spectacle. They thronged in great numbers. The barber returned at the town's outskirts and said, 'O Rathors, people have gathered in great strength. They are impatient to see you beheaded. You must not delay.' The Rathor kings said, 'Tell your kings to kill us in public. Ask your people to stand on both sides of the road. Trotting on our horsebacks, we'll go up to the other end of the town and return. Your king should behead us then.' *O maharaj!* Thus they said, 'Virat Nagar shall bustle with activity. People will behold a great spectacle. We seek emancipation at the hands of your kings. People should line up on either side of the road. Only after we have sported our horses for a while should we be slain.' The barber went straight to the court. *O maharaj!* He conveyed the message to his masters. The kings said, 'O chieftains, our enemy is as meek as lamb. Where would they escape? Let them sport for a while. We should stand on either sides, ready to strike. They will go across to the other end of the street. When they return we will kill them.' *O maharaj!* People stood in two



rows. The Rathor princes pondered for a while. May you be well,
O honkaria. Life is short but the tale never ends.

They invoked the deities.

They invoked the deities.

They invoked Khetlo, the deity of the fields and farms.

‘O Khetlo, we seek your protection.

We seek your protection.

O God, please be on our side.’

They entreated Chamunda.

They entreated Chamunda.

To Goddess Chamunda they implored.

‘Please be on our side, O Goddess.

Please be on our side.

O Mother, we seek your help.’

They prayed to Bhavani Jogni.

They prayed to Bhavani Jogni.

‘O Goddess, please help us.’

All the family Gods and deities were invoked.

All the family Gods and deities were invoked.

The Rathors sought their help.

‘We are in an alien land, O Bhavani.

We are in an alien land.

We are strangers in this land.’

‘We pay our respect to our ancestors.

We pay our respect to our ancestors.

Respectfully, we invoke their names.’

‘Your empty coffer will be filled with blood, O Bhavani.

Your empty coffer will be filled with blood.

You will be propitiated.’



'Dwell on the blades of our swords, O Bhavani.

Dwell on the blades of our swords.

See that we return victorious.'

Kesar Kalmi, the mare,

Kesar Kalmi, the mare,

She spoke to Pabu.

'O son, I'm with you.

I'm with you.

Give me a spear to fight with.'

'Place a sword in my mouth, O Pabu.

Place a sword in my mouth.

I'll kill the people standing on the left.'

'You may strike the people on your right, O son.

You may strike the people on your right.

Kill the people standing to your right.'

'Those who try to escape, O Chando,

Those who try to escape,

Kill those who try to get away.'

'Take out my rein, O Pabu.

Take out my rein.

For a while we'll sport around.'

Pabu sported on his mare.

He sported on the his mare.

With great skill he sported.

They made an assault.

They made an assault.

They assaulted the people of Virat Nagar.

Like the swift wind, Kesar galloped.

Like the swift wind, she galloped.

She rushed amidst the army of Suro and Sajmol.



The Rathors struck the people of Virat Nagar.
 They struck the people of Virat Nagar.
 They slew and slaughtered them violently.

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Pabu and Chando pondered for a while. ‘Only two of us have come to Virat Nagar. We stand on unequal grounds of strength. We’ll have to face scores of people. Horses and mares, camels and elephants, all will have gathered to fight against us.’ *O maharaj!* Pabu said, ‘O Chandoji, we must not delay. We’ll invoke the deity of the fields and farms. The deity will protect us. The deity has remained hungry for a long time. We’ll propitiate him with a sacrifice. He’ll rest on the edges of our swords.’ *O maharaj!* Chando invoked God. They offered whiffs of gugal incense to the deity and blew a conch. They worshipped ardently. They invoked Khetlo, the protecting deity of the farms and fields. ‘O God, we beseech you to be with us. Please reside on the tips of our spears and swords. We’ll propitiate you with a suitable sacrifice.’ Then they entreated Mother Chamunda, ‘O Goddess Chamunda, bring your empty coffer, it will be filled with blood.’ Then they prayed to Bhavani Jogni, ‘O Mother, be on our side. Reside on the tips of our swords and spears. We’ll make your coffer overflow with blood.’ Thus they begged the Gods and Goddesses to be with them in the alien land.

(Tambur) Suddenly, Kesar Kalmi spoke in a human voice, ‘O sons, I was your mother in previous birth. I have now come to the mortal world in the form of a mare for your well-being. I’ll make you victorious. None can harm you when I’m around. I’ll attack the people standing on the left side. Pull out my rein and place a dagger in my mouth. Pabuji will slay the people on the right. Those who try to escape will die at Chando’s hands.’ *O maharaj!* Thus spoke the mare in human voice. Pabu and Chando listened carefully. *(Tambur)* They placed a dagger in the mare’s mouth. Pabu held the sword in his right hand. Chando was on guard with weapons in his arm.



Pabu lead the mare to the battleground. For a while, she sported around. She moved as swiftly as the wind. Thus, they attacked the people of Virat Nagar. *Khama*.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The army of Suro and Sajmol had assembled on either side of the road. Kesar trotted through the queue. The chieftains were standing upright as pillars. With a dagger in her mouth, Kesar made her way through the crowd. The people were struck as if they were being reaped as corn. Pabu held his lance high. He slew men standing on his right. Lacerated heads fell in front of their chopped bodies and the trunks slouched rearward. *O maharaj!* They struck at the files of people on either side. Those who tried to escape died at Chando's hands. The people of Virat Nagar were massacred. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The queens ran to save their lives. The Rathors pondered for a while. Pabu said, 'O Chando, there is no time for delay. We must follow the queens to their palace and bring them down. They went to the palace of clouds. They climbed the stairs with hurried steps. They said to the queens, 'This is not a time to make delay. We'll take you to our land in a decorated carriage. We've slashed the heads of your husbands. We'll place their heads on a platter. We'll take you along with these platters in your lap. Once we fulfill our pledge, we'll bring you back. We'll dip a kaniyor twig in nectar and circle it around the bodies of your husbands and they will come back to life.' *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The queens climbed into the decorated carriages. They sat with the platters in their laps. Suro and Sajmol's heads were placed on them. *Khel khelan khalle khat.* The carriage with the queens set out rattling. They set off for Gadh Gujhania. Hurriedly, they tore the path. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* They arrived at Gadh Gujhania. Clouds of dust arose as they drew nearer. May you be well, *O honkaria.* Life is short but the tale never ends.

They came in kicking clouds of dust.

They came in kicking clouds of dust...*ra...ji...*

The queens arrived in the decorated carriages.



The queens arrived in the decorated carriages.

The queens of Suro and Sajmol,

The queens of Suro and Sajmol,

They arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

They arrived at Gadh Gujhanian.

They set off for Jhayeria.

They set off for Jhayeria.

They arrived at the outskirts of Jhayeria.

They arrived at the outskirts of Jhayeria.

In the glistening green garden,

In the glistening green garden,

They stepped out of the carriage in the garden.

They stepped out of the carriage in the garden.

Chando spoke to the malan.

He spoke to the malan.

‘Convey a message to our vevan.

Convey a message to our vevan.’

‘Tell her that the Rathors have vanquished Virat Nagar.

The Rathors have vanquished Virat Nagar.’

‘They await a ceremonial reception.

They await a ceremonial reception.’

The malan hurriedly tore up the path.

She hurriedly tore up the path.

She climbed the palace of clouds.

She climbed the palace of clouds.

Jeevta! Bhalai!

Thus spoke the malan.

Thus she spoke.



‘O mother, listen to what I say.’

‘This is an occasion to rejoice, O mother.

This is an occasion to rejoice.

This is an occasion for song and dance.’

Thus spoke Alkhu,

Thus she said,

‘O maids, listen to what I say.’

‘We’ll go and welcome our guests, O maids.

We’ll go and welcome our guests.

We must go to Suraj Pol.’

Alkhu adorned herself in many ways.

She adorned herself in many ways.

She embellished herself in various ways.

Alkhu donned a befitting skirt.

She donned a befitting skirt.

She chose a blouse that went well with her.

Alkhu picked her best necklace.

She picked her best necklace.

A pretty necklace adorned her neck.

A nose-ring glittered on her nose.

A nose-ring glittered on her nose.

She wore a glittering nose-ring.

She dotted her forehead with vermilion.

She dotted her forehead with vermilion.

A vermilion mark adorned her forehead.

Pearls sparkled in her locks.

Pearls sparkled in her locks.

She weaved pearls into her locks.

Alkhu was clad in a sari that suited her best.

She was clad in a sari that suited her best.



She was draped in a gorgeous sari.

Alkhu adorned herself in many ways.

She adorned herself in many ways.

She embellished herself in various ways.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The malan came to the glistening green garden. Chando and Pabu said, 'There is no time for delay. Go to your mistress and inform her about our arrival.' *O maharaj!* The malan said, 'O brothers, please tell me what message you wish me to convey?' The brothers said, 'Sister, tell her that the Rathors have arrived. Virat Nagar has been plundered. Adorned in all finery, the Rathors await a ceremonial welcome. Ask her to come to Suraj Pol to put an auspicious mark on our foreheads.' *O maharaj!* The malan raced towards town. She climbed the palace of clouds with hasty steps. She arrived at Alkhu's palace and said, 'This is an occasion to rejoice.' *O maharaj!* Alkhu pondered for a while. 'The Rathors steal buffaloes. They survive on stolen booty. It is unlikely that they could have killed my brothers. They cannot accomplish such a feat. I'll go and find out though.' She said aloud, 'We'll go and welcome the Rathors.' The women put on fine clothes. They suitably adorned themselves. ²¹Alkhu stood before a mirror. She adorned herself in various ways. She was bedecked in all her finery. She donned her best skirt and tied her hair with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that went well with her and picked her best necklace. The pearls sparkled in her locks. *O maharaj!* She was clad in a sari that suited her beautifully. 'O maids, move swiftly,' she said.

(Tambur) The vevan came to welcome the guests. *O maharaj!* She caught sight of the carriages from her brother's town. She saw her bhabhis sitting inside with the severed heads of Suro and Sajmol in their laps. The upturned moustaches and curved eyebrows were unmistakably her brothers'. On the platters, lay their heads. Alkhu crumbled on her feet at the sight. She beat her breasts and lamented. She whimpered and wailed over and again. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.



Alkhu whimpered and wailed.

She whimpered and wailed.

She wept and lamented.

The heads of her brothers,

The heads of her brothers,

Were lying on the platters.

Alkhu beat her breasts.

She beat her breasts.

She wept and lamented.

‘May you be doomed to hell, O Chando.

May you be doomed to hell.

My brave brothers have been slain.’

Thus spoke Chando,

Thus he spoke,

‘O vevan, listen to what I say.’

‘You had put marks on our necks, O vevan.

You had put marks on our necks.

On our horse’s tail you had marked a spot.’

‘You tarnished our name in front of all, O vevan.

You tarnished our name in front of all.

You hurled abusive words at us.’

‘Your brothers’ heads you sought, O vevan.

Your brothers’ heads you sought.

We’ve slain their heads to fulfill our pledge.’

‘You’ve done ill in this world, O Chando.

You’ve done ill in this world.

You have killed my siblings.’

O maharaj!

Alkhu flung away the platter. She took off her adornments. She beat



hard on her breasts. ‘May you be confined to hell. You have slain my brothers. You’ve done ill in the world.’²² She wept and whined, wailed and whimpered. Chando said, ‘O vevan, You’ve got what you wanted. Your brothers’ end you sought. Why do you now regret your act? Please calm down and put auspicious marks on our foreheads. We had come to Suraj Pol, expecting a ceremonial welcome. But you made marks on our necks instead. You marked a spot on our horse’s tail. You’ve brought your own doom.’ *O maharaj!* Weeping and lamenting Alkhu said, ‘O Chando, may you be banished to hell. Ill has been done in the world. Why didn’t you ignore my words as a woman’s whim? Why did you take such an extreme step?’ ‘O Alkhu, you asked for blood. You desired your brothers’ fall. We await a suitable welcome. You must come and welcome us with a red mark on our foreheads.’

O maharaj! Grieving, Alkhu stepped aside. The Rathors stood waiting. How could Alkhu extend a welcome? How could Alkhu make auspicious marks when she had lost her brothers? She wasn’t in a proper state of mind. Such shrews should be condemned to hell. She had caused her brothers’ fall. One must think before one speaks. The wise do not waste words. One mustn’t be haughty and headstrong. *Khama! (Tambur)* The heads of Suro and Sajmol were brought in. The queens sat inside the carriage with their husbands’ heads on their laps. *O maharaj!* This is a tale of bravery and courage. The Rathors were the jewels of the land. The bravery of the undaunted should not be put to test. The modesty of noble persons must not be doubted. One must not pay heed to the words of a wicked wench. The Rathors conversed among themselves. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

‘You got what you desired, O Alkhu,’ said Chando.

‘You got what you desired.

The Rathors have fulfilled their pledge.’

Alkhu mourned and wept over and again.

She mourned and wept over and again.

Chando had fulfilled his pledge.



The Rathors returned to Gadh Gujhanian.
 They returned to Gadh Gujhanian.
 They returned to their homeland.

The Rathors were the pride of the land.
 They were the pride of the land.
 They were the tigers of Gadh Gujhanian.

People adored them.
 People adored them.
 Their bravery was matchless.

May their mother live hale and hearty.
 May their mother live hale and hearty.
 They were the jewels of the land.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The Rathors lived happily in Gadh Gujhanian but Alkhu's grief was boundless. Had she extended them a proper welcome, she might not have had to undergo such a painful plight. But she had put her brothers' reputation at stake. *O maharaj!* The Rathors ate, drank and lived merrily in Gadh Gujhanian. They had put their past behind. The days rolled into months and the months turned into years. *O maharaj!* One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be auspicious. Jhendaro Khensi pondered for a while. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.





JHENDARO KHENSI

Jhendaro pondered for a while.

He pondered for a while.

He thought for some time.

A tale of bravery and courage I narrate.

A tale of bravery and courage I narrate.

This is a tale about the exploits of brave men.

Jhendaro dreamt a dream.

He dreamt a dream.

The family deity appeared before him.

‘This is a time to go on a hunt.

This is a time to go on a hunt.

How can you sleep at this hour?’

Jhendaro could not sleep a wink.

He could not sleep a wink.

He kept tossing and turning in bed.

Startled, he sat up straight in his bed.

Startled, he sat up straight in his bed.

He offered incense to the deity.

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhendaro Khensi was in deep slumber. The midnight moon shone



brightly. Jhendaro had a dream. The family deity appeared before him. Startled, he sat up in bed. The deity said, 'O Jhendaro, how can you sleep at this time? We are the people who act and achieve. We are the children of a Rajput king, born in the Khatri clan. Let us have some fun and sport. We'll sate our palate with sumptuous meat. We'll relish the best brew of wine. Shake the slumber off your eyes.' Ayaro, the family deity, appeared in Jhendaro's dream. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro sat up in his bed. He could not sleep a wink. Thus God Ayaro, who has a voracious appetite, spoke to him. *O maharaj!* As the sun descended on the other side of the western hill, darkness engulfed the earth. Jhendaro sharpened the blades of his arms. He moved quickly, away and beyond. He arrived at the pasturage of Jhenjhania. He stooped to trace the hoof marks.

At the pasturage of Jhenjhania,
At the pasturage of Jhenjhania,
Jhendaro arrived at the pasturage.

To trace the trail he bent.
To trace the trail he bent.
He crouched to have a closer look.

A boar frequented the path.
A boar frequented the path.
He had left deep hoof-marks.

At the Dipawali tank,
At the Dipawali tank,
At the Dipawali tank he arrived.

He dug a pit.
He dug a pit.
He hid inside the pit.

The sun slanted towards the west.
The sun slanted towards the west.
It descended on the other side of the hill.



Jhendaro killed peacocks and fowls.
 He killed peacocks and fowls.
 He flung them on the other side of the pit.
 Deer and doe,
 Deer and doe,
 Many a deer he killed.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhendaro Khensi dug a pit at the Dipawali Tank. He lay low inside the pit. As the sun descended the other side of the hill, darkness engulfed the earth. The parakeets flew back to their nests. At twilight, peacocks and fowls came to the tank. Jhendaro killed them in great numbers and flung them on the edge of the pit. *O maharaj!* After a while a deer and doe arrived. They were followed by sambars and their hinds. Jhendaro killed them one after the other and flung them on the fringe of the pit. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro awaited a wild boar. He did not use his gun. He used other weapons but did not fire his gun. After a while all the other animals left. As the darkness deepened a wild boar arrived. A bell was tied around his neck. The bell jingled as he walked. He was the Rathors' favourite boar. It was now midnight. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro crept closer. The boar stepped into the water. Jhendaro aimed and pulled the trigger. The boar fell to the ground.

A loud noise rent the air.
 A loud noise rent the air.
 The sound was heard at a great distance.
 'Who has shot a gun?' asked Chando.
 'Who has shot a gun?
 At midnight the shot was heard.
 'Who has shot a gun?' asked Chando.
 'Who has shot a gun?'
 The Rathors sprang to their feet.



Chando fastened the girdle around his waist.

He fastened the girdle around his waist.

A girdle he fastened around his waist.

He raised high his fierce spear,

He raised high his fierce spear.

A fierce spear he held in his hand.

Chando descended the palace.

He descended the palace.

He descended the steps of the palace of clouds.

He headed for Pabu's dwelling.

He headed for Pabu's dwelling.

He went to Pabu's palace.

'How can you sleep at this hour, O brother?' asked Chando.

'How can you sleep at this hour?

I heard a shot at midnight.'

Pabu sprang to his feet.

He sprang to his feet.

Thus Chando and Pabu engaged in talk.

'Who must have fired a gun, O brother?

Who must have fired a gun?

Who must have shot at midnight?'

'From where did the sound come, O brother?' asked Pabu.

'From where did the sound come?

A gun shot was heard in the middle of the night.'

'At the Dipawali tank, O brother,' replied Chando.

'At the Dipawali tank.

A gun shot was fired at the Dipawali tank.'

Chando fled in haste.

He fled in haste.

Hurriedly, he arrived at the Dipawali tank.



He looked for a trail.

He looked for a trail.

He moved around the Dipawali tank.

He shouted aloud.

He shouted aloud.

He called aloud at the Dipawali tank.

He saw someone hiding among the bushes.

He saw someone hiding among the bushes.

He caught sight of Jhendaro amidst a thicket.

‘Who shot the gun, O brother-in-law?’ asked Chando.

‘Who shot the gun?’

A shot was heard at midnight.’

‘I shot the gun, O Chando,’ said Jhendaro.

‘I shot the gun.’

I shot the gun to kill a wild boar.’

(*Tambur*)

The brothers-in-law met amidst the wilderness. Chando saw the lifeless boar. His pet boar lay dead. *O maharaj!* They quarreled over the dead boar. ‘O brother-in-law, this was our pet animal. You low-breed, why did you kill our boar? You knew that he was our favourite boar.’ Jhendaro said, ‘I merely shot a beast of the wilderness. I didn’t know to whom he belonged. I hunted him without knowing this. But you must not grieve. I’ll give you your share of the meat.’ *O maharaj!* Chando said, ‘How dare you say such words? How dare you raise your voice? You killed our boar and now you say such horrible things! I’ll strike you with my spear and tear you apart.’ Thus they quarreled over a dead boar. The two relatives fought in the middle of the night. ‘Your name was not written on the boar. How could I know that he was yours? But I won’t eat him alone. Willingly, I’ll share his flesh with you,’ Jhendaro said again.²³

Chando replied, ‘O brother-in-law, mind your tongue. You killed



our favourite animal and now you gloat about it?' O *maharaj*!
Annoyed and agitated, Chando returned to his palace. Jhendaro
busied himself in skinning the beast.

He sliced the boar into two.

He sliced the boar into two.

He cut the beast in two halves.

He set aside his brother-in-law's share.

He set aside his brother-in-law's share.

He set aside one half.

Hurriedly, he tore up the path.

Hurriedly, he tore up the path.

He walked with hasty steps.

He called out to his brother-in-law.

He called out to his brother-in-law.

'O brother-in-law, listen to what I say.'

'I've come to give your share, O Chando.

I've come to give your share.

I have brought you your portion of the boar.'

Thus spoke Pabu,

Thus he spoke,

'Listen to what I say.'

'I spared your life this once, O brother-in-law.

I spared your life this once.

But be careful in future.'

'Do not cross the borders of Gadh Gujhanian ever again, O
Jhendaro.

Do not cross the borders of Gadh Gujhanian ever again.

Never step inside our borders again.'



Khama! (Tambur)

Jhendaro skinned the carcass. He carried it to Pabu's palace. He shouted aloud for Pabu, 'O brother-in-law, are you asleep or awake? I've brought your share of the boar. I'm in a hurry to go home. Come out quickly or I'll leave.' A wicked man's words reveal his character. Jhendaro's words annoyed the Rathor prince. 'O brother-in-law, do not get on my nerves. Rather, mind your tongue. Why don't you go back just as you came? O *maharaj!* Jhendaro Khensi pondered for a while. 'The Rathors are irked and annoyed. What should I do?' He said aloud, 'I've brought you a piece of the fresh meat.' But the Rathor said bitterly. 'I would have skinned you alive. I spared your life for the sake of my sister. We don't want to see our sister in a widow's clothes. O you low-bred swine, watch your words.' But for his sister's happiness, the Rathor prince would have killed Jhendaro. He would have killed the slayer of his favourite boar. A crestfallen Jhendaro headed back. He carried the carcass back home. He spoke to his queen.

Thus spoke Jhendaro,

Thus he spoke,

'O queen, listen to what I say.'

'I have been to Gadh Gujhanian, O queen.

I have been to Gadh Gujhanian.

I would have died at your brother's hand.'

'What is the matter, O king?' said Tema.

'What is the matter?

What happened at Gadh Gujhanian?'

'With whom did you have a skirmish, O king?

With whom did you have a skirmish?

With whom did you fight?'

'Why were my brothers irked, O king?

Why were they irked?

Why was Chando annoyed with you?'



'For the sake of a boar, O queen.
 For the sake of a boar.
 He would have killed me for a wild beast.'
 'The boar was gifted to me in dowry, O king.
 The boar was gifted to me in dowry.
 That boar belonged to me.'
 'How can they claim the boar as theirs, O king?
 How can they claim the boar as theirs?
 They gave the boar to me.'
 A woman mustn't ever be trusted.
 A woman mustn't ever be trusted.
 You must never rely on a woman.
 Your sisters and daughters,
 Your sisters and daughters,
 Trust them not.
 'Why did they beat you, O king?
 Why did they beat you?
 The pasturage of Jhenjhanian belongs to me.'
 'Parevo, the stud bull, O king,
 Parevo, the stud bull,
 Parevo was given to me in dowry.'
 'What else did they give you, O queen?
 What else did they give you?
 What else was promised to you as your wedding gift?'

(Tambur)

Jhendaro pondered for a while, 'I'll carry this boar back home. My queen will feast on its sumptuous meat.' He carried the boar's carcass to the palace flaunting it loftily as if it were a cloud. The king arrived at his palace. He spoke to his queen, 'O queen, I had a narrow escape today. I would have died at your brother's hand. By God's grace I



was spared.’ (*Tambur*) ‘O king, what an awful thing to happen! Why do you say such things? Tell me, what afflicts you? Where did you go in the cover of darkness? Why would you have died?’ asked the queen. ‘I picked a quarrel with your brothers. I would have died at their hands. Chando brandished a spear at me. But I evaded his blow. I fled to save my life,’ said Jhendaro. The queen said, ‘O king, over what matter did you and my brother pick a row?’ *O maharaj!* The king said, ‘O queen, we quarrelled over a wild boar. My brother-in-law would have killed me for the sake of a boar. With great difficulty I managed to give him the slip. Chando was annoyed as I killed his favourite boar. Believe me, O queen, trust me, I didn’t know that the boar belonged to him. How could I know that it was the Rathors’ favourite boar? Chando heard the gun and rushed to the pasturage. I had a narrow escape.’

O maharaj! The husband narrated a made-up tale. And what a gullible wife to believe it! Never trust a woman for she can deceive you for even a stranger’s sake. You must not confide your secrets to any woman. *O maharaj!* The queen said, ‘O king, my brothers are so haughty! They’ve held back my promised gifts. I never claimed them. After all, what was your fault? You merely killed an insignificant beast. Why should my brothers brood over a boar?’ Such shrews can incite a quarrel without reason.

O maharaj! The king and the queen engaged in discussion. ‘O queen, what else did your brothers promise you?’ Cunningly, the king tried to prise out Tema’s family secrets. The queen was deeply engrossed in discussion. She could not discriminate between right and wrong. Such quarrelsome women should be condemned to death. The queen sowed seeds of destruction. She rattled on, ‘O king, the pasturage of Jhenjhanian and Parevo, the stud bull, were given to me. The pots and pitchers of gold were promised to me in dowry. When they have held back my remaining gifts, why should they fuss over an insignificant animal?’ The king twirled the ends of his moustache. His pride was hurt. He was annoyed. He coaxed his wife to tell him more. The queen prattled on, revealing every secret. ‘The Dipawali Tank and the pasturage, O king, belong to me. O, my mean brothers



have held back my dowry.’ The king became restless. He could not sleep a wink. He kept tossing and turning in bed. He yearned for revenge. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Thus spoke the king,
 Thus he spoke,
 ‘O brothers, listen to what I say.’
 ‘Summon the cutlers at once, O brother.
 Summon the cutlers at once.
 Call them from Ahmadavad.’

The chieftains raced at the king’s command.
 They raced at the king’s command.
 Fifteen in the place of one ran to accomplish the task.

The chieftain summoned the cutlers.
 They summoned the cutlers.
 They sent for the cutlers from Ahmadavad.

The cutlers came swiftly.
 They came swiftly.
 They arrived quickly from Ahmadavad.

Clouds of dust arose as they came.
 Clouds of dust rose as they came.
 Kicking clouds of dust, they travelled along.

The cutlers arrived in a carriage.
 They arrived in a carriage.
 Clouds of dust arose as they came.

At the outskirts the cutlers encamped.
 At the outskirts they encamped.
 The cutlers encamped at the outskirts of the town.

The Khensis summoned the blacksmiths.
 They summoned the blacksmiths.



They sent for the blacksmiths.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Man and wife acted with a single heart. The queen betrayed her own brothers. One by one, she shared all her family's confidential matters. To win her husband she gave away her siblings' secrets. Such mean harlots should be condemned to hell. Wise is the person who is just to all. But what can one say about women! At her parent's house, a woman will loathe her relatives by marriage, but as soon as she sets her feet in her husband's house, she forgets her blood relations. Such feuding women should be condemned. The queen gossiped carelessly. The king grabbed the much awaited opportunity. He desired to possess his brothers-in-law's wealth. He became thirsty for his their blood.

O maharaj! Jhendaro Khensi spoke aloud, 'O chieftains, there is no time for delay. Move swiftly. Summon the cutlers from Ahmadavad. Ask them to come in large numbers.' *(Tambur)* While the fortunate ones get away with chatter, the less fortunate have to toil. Fifteen in the place of one raced. Hastily, they went to Ahmadavad. They knocked at the cutlers' doors. 'O brothers, there is no time for delay. We need your services urgently. You must at once come to Jhayeria.' The aggressive are happy to pick a quarrel. A drunkard will be pleased with a goblet filled with drink and a thief will consider himself fortunate when he gains the dark cover of night. Similarly, the cutlers were happy to make use of the opportunity. They grabbed the chance to earn some more. 'At your bidding we shall come but you mustn't haggle about the price.' 'O brothers, name your price and you'll be paid. But you must accomplish the assigned work within the time line.' The cutlers loaded their carts with their belongings. Hastily, they tore the path. They trod along the way to Jhayeria. Clouds of dust arose as they travelled. They arrived in Jhayeria. They camped at the outskirts. Jhendaro Khensi spoke aloud, 'O chieftains, this is not a time to delay. Take out your weapons, both new and old. Take the rusted arms to the cutlers.'



(*Tambur*) People thronged the camps of the cutlers. *O maharaj!* Various kinds of arms were brought out. Guns were brought from Bundikot. Spears and swords of all shapes and sizes were gathered. Daggers and knives were handed to the cutlers. The cutlers worked without respite. They toiled day and night. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro twirled and twisted his moustache with pride. He called upon his warriors. They all assembled at the square. Under a neem tree, rugs were spread with the pointed tips of spears. They sat upright on the yellow and green rugs. Jhendaro Khensi spoke aloud.

With the pointed tip of a spear, they spread the rugs.
With the pointed tip of a spear, they spread the rugs.
Grey and white rugs were spread.

Thus spoke Jhendaro Khensi,
Thus he spoke,
'O brothers, I implore you, listen to me.'

'In the battlefield, our swords will clang, O brothers.
In the battlefield, our swords will clang.
We'll fire guns during the battle.'

'We'll mount an attack on my brothers-in-law.
We'll mount an attack on my brothers-in-law.
We'll cut their throats.'

'We'll attack our in-laws, O brothers.
We'll attack our in-laws.
We'll plunder their land.'

'Brace yourself, O brothers.
Brace yourself.
This is a time to test one's mettle.'

'Only the brave and courageous should join me, O brothers.
Only the brave and courageous should join me.
A warrior worth his name alone should pick the challenge.'

'We may die in the battle, O brothers.



We may die in the battle.
 We'll embrace death bravely.'
 'No one should stay back, O brothers.
 No one should stay back.
 This is a moment to brace ourselves.'
 'They have squandered my share, O brothers.
 They have squandered my share.
 The green pasturage of Jhenjhanian belongs to me.'
 The assembly dispersed.
 The assembly dispersed.
 They returned hastily to their homes.
 The sun went down behind the hill.
 The sun went down behind the hill.
 The parakeets flew back to their nests.
 The Khensis loaded their guns.
 The Khensis loaded their guns.
 They loaded their guns with care.
 The warriors braced themselves.
 The warriors braced themselves.
 They held high their weapons.
 The arms were sharpened at Jhayeria.
 The arms were sharpened at Jhayeria.
 The cutlers sharpened the weapons.
Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The cutlers toiled day and night. They worked without respite. They sharpened the blades of the swords. They serviced the daggers and knives. They brought back the guns to use. Jhendaro Khensi spoke aloud, 'O chieftains, we'll meet briefly at the square. Everyone



assemble under the neem tree. The rugs were spread with the pointed tips of spears. They sat on the green and yellow rugs. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) Rounds of opium-drink were served. The best liquor was served generously. Jhendaro Khensi said, 'This is a moment to brace ourselves. The time to prove our prowess has come. I want to rekindle the long-forgotten feud. I buried the feud to marry Tema. But once again I long for revenge.'

O maharaj! As the sun descended on the other side of the western hills, darkness swallowed the earth. The parakeets returned to their nests. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Jhendaro said to his chieftains, 'There is no time for delay. Hold your guns brought from the land of Bundikot, hold high your fiery spears. Flaunt your daggers and swords.' *O maharaj!* The Khensis picked their weapons. They loaded their guns. The entire town was alerted. The Khensis itched for some action. They felt angry and annoyed. (*Tambur*) The clamour of the hustle and bustle reached Tema's palace. She summoned her attendants.

Tema said to her maids,
She said to her maids,
'Listen to what I say.'

'Go to the assembly of the king, O maids.
Go to the assembly of the king.
To the busy court you should go.'

'Call upon your master, O maids.
Call upon your master.
Convey my message to him.'

Fifteen maids in the place of one raced at her order.
Fifteen maids in the place of one raced.
To carry out her order fifteen maids rushed to the court.

Lali and Phuli,
Lali and Phuli,
They rushed with hasty steps.



They arrived at the court.

They arrived at the court.

At the assembly of the Khensis they reached.

They spoke to the king,

They spoke to the king.

‘O king, please listen to what we say.’

‘Our queen has sent for you, O king.

Our queen has sent for you.

She wishes to speak to you.’

The king fastened his gold-encrusted footwear.

The king fastened his gold-encrusted footwear.

Gold-encrusted footwear he fastened hastily.

He arrived at the palace.

He arrived at the palace.

To the palace of clouds he came.

Thus spoke Tema,

Thus she spoke,

‘O king, listen to what I say.’

‘I welcome you to my palace, O king.

I welcome you to my palace.

You are welcome to my dwelling.’

‘Be seated on this high couch, O king.

Be seated on this high couch.’

They engaged in conversation.

‘Why have you summoned me to your palace, O queen?

Why have you summoned me to your palace?

What important matter do you wish to discuss?’

‘Are you hatching a secret plot, O king?

Are you hatching a secret plot?

It seems that you are engrossed in some thought.’



She tried to find the reason.
 She tried to find the reason.
 The king told her about his intention.
 'I'll assault my brothers-in-law, O queen.
 I'll assault my brothers-in-law.
 I've conspired to attack your brothers.'
 Thus spoke Tema,
 Thus she spoke,
 'O king, listen to what I say.'
 'Chase the stray dogs and return, O king.
 Chase the stray dogs and return.
 You won't be able to do any more.'

(Tambur) O maharaj!

'O girls, there is no time to delay,' Tema said to her maids. 'Be quick on your feet. Find out why a goat has been sacrificed. Why is there so much commotion at the square? Why have people gathered under the neem tree? Go and call your king. Tell him that I wish to see him.' Lali and Phuli, Remli and Temli, Kanku and Jhamku, all raced at her command. *(Tambur)* They descended the palace of clouds. They arrived at the court and queued before the king. They said, 'O king, there is no time for delay. You must come quickly to the palace. Our mistress wants to see you.' The king fastened his gold-encrusted footwear. He took his stick in hand. He passed through the alleyways. Hurriedly, he tore the way. He arrived at Tema's palace. He sat on the high couch. *Khama!*

(Tambur) The king and the queen engaged in conversation. *O maharaj!* The king asked, 'O queen, why did you send for me? Why did you call me at this hour? Tell me, what ails you?' Tema said, 'Where are you planning to go? Why is the town on alert? The sun descended on the other side of the hill, darkness has swallowed the earth. The parakeets have flown back to their nests. But you did not return to me.' *O maharaj!* The king said, 'Do you want to know the



reason? I am going to plunder your brother's land. I've hatched a plot to kill my brothers-in-law.' (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* 'O king, you may go, but you'll encounter only stray dogs in Gadh Gujhanian,' said Tema. The king felt annoyed. 'O queen, why do you say such inauspicious words? Am I not a valiant king? Why will I be confronted merely by stray dogs?' The king felt irked. He twirled his moustache, 'O queen, your words irritate me. Why do you demean me?' The king felt cross and annoyed. 'O king, Pabu and Chando are not in their palace. You'll return empty-handed,' said the queen.

'You must go with pomp, O king.

You must go with pomp.

But you'll find merely stray dogs in Gadh Gujhanian.'

'Those whom you seek are not at home, O king.

Those whom you seek are not at home.

You won't find your enemy in Gadh Gujhanian.'

'Pabu's wedding is arranged, O king.

His wedding is arranged.

Chando has gone with him.'

'Only street dogs roam the town, O king.

Only street dogs roam the town.

Chase the dogs and return home.'

The king was irked and annoyed.

He was irked and annoyed.

Bitterness gnawed his heart.

Thus spoke the king,

Thus he spoke,

'O chieftains, listen to what I say.'

'We may die in the battle, O brothers.

We may die in the battle.

In the name of bravery, we'll embrace death.'



'Gather your courage, O brothers.
Gather your courage.
Don't allow your courage to fail you.'

They held their swords high.
They held their swords high.
They gathered in high spirits.

'Hold aloft your guns, O brothers.
Hold aloft your guns.
Hold tight your fiery spears,' said the king.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Tema said to the king, 'Chando and Pabu are not at home. Pabuji's nuptials are arranged. You will return empty handed.' *O maharaj!* The king felt annoyed. A wave of anger surged through his body, from head to toe. *Khama!* The Khensis harnessed their horses. They fastened the saddles. They secured the long loose reins to the bridles. They took the guns from the land of Bundikot and slung them across their shoulders. *O maharaj!* They held the loose long reins of their horses and cracked the whip hard. (*Tambur*) May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The Khensis invoked their deities.
They invoked their deities.
They invoked Khetlo, the deity of fields and farms.

'O Khetlo, we seek your protection.
We seek your protection.
O God, please be on our side.'

They entreated Mother Chamunda.
They entreated Mother Chamunda.
To Mother Chamunda they prayed.

Please be on our side, O Goddess.
Please be on our side.
O Mother, we seek your help.'



They implored Bhavani Jogni.

They implored Bhavani Jogni.

‘O Goddess, please be with us.’

The Khensis saddled their horses.

They saddled their horses.

They sported their horses.

The Khensis invaded Buro’s house.

They invaded Buro’s house.

They encircled Buro’s palace.

‘Why are you hiding inside, O brother-in-law?

Why are you hiding inside?

Come out, you low-bred swine!’ challenged the Khensi king.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Buro Rathor was alone at home. The Khensis attacked his house. They surrounded his house from all sides. *(Tambur)* The Khensi king bellowed, ‘O you low-bred swine, come out at once. There is no time for delay. O Rathor, how can you sleep at this hour? Why don’t you come out to greet your sister’s spouse?’ *O maharaj!* Buro pondered for a while, ‘My brother-in-law has never dared to say such words. Why is he calling me abusive names? I’ll skin him alive for his arrogance.’

O maharaj! Buro Rathor sprang to his feet. A whip made of monkey’s tail trailed from his hand. Cracking the whip, he came out. He fastened gold-encrusted footwear on his feet. He twirled and twisted his moustache. *O maharaj!* He climbed down the palace. In the courtyard he came. He peeped through the gap between the gates. Swords shone in the darkness. Their blades reflected the moonlight. The hoofs of the horses hit the ground hard. His house was surrounded from all sides. Buro pondered for a while. ‘This is strange. Ill has been done in this land.’ *O maharaj!* Buro thought for sometime. *(Tambur)* Jhendaro shouted again, ‘O brother-in-law, how can you sleep now? My horses are worn and weary. Come out, this is not a



time to make delay.’ Buro pondered for a while. ‘One mustn’t trust one’s enemy. Like a mad bull he awaits to pounce upon me. What should I do?’ He froze with fear. He stood as stationary as a pole. *O maharaj!* Stealthily, he retraced his steps. He pondered for a while. ‘Ill has been done in the world.’

(An accompanist: None will come to your rescue! The lead singer: You said it well.)

Only your own siblings,
Only your own siblings,
Your own brother will come forward to help.

They may say bitter things on your face.
They may say bitter things on your face.
But blood is always thicker than water.

Brave and courageous are your brothers.
Brave and courageous are your brothers.
They alone will come to your succour.

Buro was worried.
He was worried.
The enemy had surrounded him.

Pabu was away and out.
Pabu was away and out.
His worthy brother Pabu had gone out.

Thus spoke Buro,
Thus he spoke,
‘O brother-in-law, listen to what I say.’

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

Buro’s house was seized. It was surrounded by the enemy. Who would dare to combat such an army? Who would willingly step into death’s trap? Your brothers will share food with you from the same plate. They will stick by you. They will stand by you in your lean



days. They will die for your sake. Buro Rathor thought of his brothers. 'What should I do in your absence, O brothers? No one but you will stand by me.' Buro pondered for a while. 'Only a brother will die for a brother. But my brothers sojourn in a distant land. In their absence how do I face this fierce man?' *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Bitter words have bitter outcomes. Never pick a feud with your kith and kin. Look, how a brother-in-law has turned against his relative! ²⁴One should never keep back promised gifts. One must always give them away. A daughter is a child in her father's house. The moment she becomes a wife, she turns her back to her parents. Her bier is lifted from her new home. As soon as she steps into youth, she becomes a stranger. She supports those not her own. She turns away from her siblings. You mustn't trust her. Gifts promised must never be held back.

O maharaj! Tema intrigued with her brothers to please her consort. She betrayed the Rathors. Her brother's house was seized. The greed for dowry had turned one brother-in-law against another. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro Khensi threatened his brother-in-law. Buro said, 'O brother-in-law, the revenue of the Gadh goes to Pabu. Chando gets the income received from tax. Deval is given her share from the remaining returns. But no income comes my way. I survive on the mercy of others. My existence has no meaning. Slaying a stray dog would be more rewarding than killing me. I am as worthless as a low-bred man. What will you get by taking my life?' Jhendaro Khensi replied, 'O you low-bred swine, how you fear death! Why can't you walk defiantly? Come out and look me into the eyes.' *O maharaj!* But who'd willingly step into death's mouth? Buro was frozen with fear. Trembling he stammered, 'How should one face such a fierce foe?' Fear numbed his spirit. He said, 'I seek your pardon, I have a secret or two to tell. I'll show a place where you may lead an ambush. You needn't despair and go empty handed.' *O maharaj!* Jhendaro replied, 'O Buro, damn your chatter. Bring a buffalo from somewhere. We'll kill the buffalo and return home.' Buro said, 'O brother-in-law, I'm not a useless wretch. I speak of your interest. I'll lead you to Bhagania. Hundred and forty Charans lie there in deep slumber.



Why don't you plunder the place? I'll go first and wake them up. After a while you may lead your army inside and invade them.' The two brothers-in-law concurred in silence.

O maharaj! Buro Rathor descended the palace. He sported a stick in his hand. He walked with hasty steps. Hurriedly, he tore the way. He arrived at Bhagania. Hundred and forty Charans were in deep slumber. Softly, they snored in unison. *O maharaj!* Buro Rathor came inside anxiously with hasty steps. He kicked hard on their sides to wake them. Startled, the Charans sat up in their beds. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. *Khama! Jeevta*.

Thus spoke Buro,
Thus he spoke,
'O brother-in-law, listen to what I say.'

'Why are you asleep at this time?
Why are you asleep at this time?
How can you feel sleepy at this hour?'

Thus spoke Bhim,
Thus he spoke,
'Tell me what has gone wrong?'

'The enemy has laid an ambush, O brother-in-law.
The enemy has laid an ambush.
The enemy has come to raid us.'

'The Khensis have invaded your village, O brother-in-law.
The Khensis have invaded your village.
They have plundered your land.'

Bhim, the chief of the Charan clan,
Bhim, the chief of the Charan clan,
Spoke to his men.

'O brothers, I implore you, listen to me.
I implore you, listen to me.
There is no time for delay.'



'Prepare an opium-drink, O brothers.
 Prepare an opium-drink.'
 They busied themselves in preparing opium-drink.
 They stirred the poppy seeds.
 They stirred the poppy seeds.
 The opium drink was stirred.
 With cupped palms they drank.
 With cupped palms they drank.
 They drank to their hearts content.
 Jhendaro shouted at the Charan chief.
 He shouted at the Charan chief.
 'O brother-in-law, come out and meet me.'
 'Come out of your house, O brother-in-law.
 Come out of your house.
 Come out and encounter me.'
 Thus spoke Bhim,
 Thus he spoke,
 'O brother-in-law, listen to what I say.'
 'Emerge from your hideaway, O brother-in-law.
 Emerge from your hideaway.'
 Jhendaro emerged from hiding.
 'My child is still in his cradle, O brother-in-law.
 My child is still in his cradle.
 My child is under my care,' said Bhim.
 'My wife is sore at me, O brother-in-law.
 My wife is sore at me.
 Deval has left our child behind.'
 'Utter not such cowardly words, O Bhim,' said Jhendaro.
 'Utter not such cowardly words.
 Show your mettle in the battlefield.'



Jhendaro shot his gun.
 Jhendaro shot his gun.
 A gun shot was fired in Bhagania.

The chief was shot dead.
 He was shot dead.
 A gun was shot in Bhagania.

Mercilessly, the people of Bhagania were massacred.
 Mercilessly they were massacred.
 Heads lay scattered on the ground.

(An accompanist: O, Bhagania has been plundered. The lead singer: Yes, what you say is right.)

Streams of blood,
 Streams of blood,
 Streams of blood flowed in the alleys.

Stones rolled along with the blood stream.
 Stones rolled along with the blood stream.
 Streams of blood flowed through the alleys.

The Khensis assaulted Bhagania.
 They assaulted Bhagania.
 The Charans were massacred mercilessly.

Never get addicted to opium.
 Never get addicted to opium.
 Addiction leads to one's downfall.

O maharaj!

The Charans sprang to their feet. Bhim, the chief of the clan, said aloud, 'O my wife's brother, why have you come? Why have you jolted us out of our sleep? What makes you so rude to us?' Buro Rathor replied, 'O Charan chief, this is not a time to delay. Be alert and agile. The enemy has plundered us. They have seized your town. While you were in deep slumber you have been surrounded.



Banish the sleep from your eyes.’ *O maharaj!* This was the time to show one’s prowess. The bravery of the brave was being put to test. Bhim, the Charan chief, sprang to his feet. ‘O my brother-in-law, who has invaded us? Who has plundered us in the middle of the night? Why has the colour of your face drained?’

O maharaj! Buro said to Bhim, ‘The Khensis have come to plunder your land. The army of Jhayeria awaits an ambush. The Khensis attacked Gadh Gujhanian and now they have surrounded Bhagania. You must remain agile and alert.’ Bhim, the Charan chief, announced, ‘O my chieftains, there is no time for delay. Be alert. Prepare opium drinks in abundance.’ The chieftains stirred the drink well. From cupped palms, they drank to their hearts’ content. *O maharaj!* Poppy seeds were stirred in a huge vessel. The drink was prepared with vigour and served generously. Inebriated, they emerged to face their foe. *Khama! (Tambur) O maharaj!* Under the spell of the opium-drink, hundred and forty Charans emerged. They came out to fight. Jhendaro shouted aloud, ‘O you low-bred swine, why did you keep us waiting? Now remain alert and agile. Come out in the open and fight us.’ Bhim and Jhendaro were brothers-in-law. Bhim had wedded Deval and Jhendaro was bound in wedlock with Tema.

O maharaj! One brother-in-law attacked another for no apparent reason. Bhim, the Charan chief, said, ‘O brother-in-law, I have to tend my child. Your wife’s sister is cross with me. She is quick to take offence. She has left our child under my care. Wait until I lull him to sleep. Keep your weapons on hold till then.’ *O maharaj!* The enemy was impatient. They opened fire in quick succession. With each bang, a Charan fell. Their heads rolled on the ground. Ruthlessly, the Charans were butchered. *O maharaj!* This is a tale of bravery and courage. Streams of blood flowed through the streets of Bhagania. Large, heavy stones rolled along with the river of blood. *O maharaj!* The Khensis slaughtered one and all. The Charans were slain in scores. Jhendaro plundered Bhagania. Numerous heads lay scattered on the ground. Ill was done in the world. The Khensis turned back their horses. They led away the herd of cows from Bhagania with them.





DEVAL

The sun set on the other side of the hill.
The sun set on the other side of the hill.
It went deep in the horizon.

The parakeets flew back to their nests.
The parakeets flew back to their nests.
To the safety of their nests they returned.

Thus spoke Deval,
Thus she spoke,
'O maids, listen to what I say.'

'Lay a high couch for me, O maids.
Lay a high couch for me.
Spread a bed for I wish to sleep.'

The maids laid a couch.
They laid a couch.
They spread a silk mattress over it.

'Spread a silk mattress on the couch, O maids.
Spread a silk mattress on it.
Cover it with fragrant flowers.'

'Sprinkle musk perfume on the couch, O maids.
Sprinkle musk perfume on the couch.
Dab the mattress with musk oil.'



The maids laid the mattress.
 They laid the mattress.
 On the high couch a mattress was spread.

The mattress was covered with flowers.
 The mattress was covered with flowers.
 With musk perfume it was dabbed.

Fragrance of the musk,
 Fragrance of the musk,
 Its fragrance filled the air.

Deval was asleep in the palace of clouds.
 Deval was asleep in the palace of clouds.
 In her palace she was fast asleep.

Slumber sealed her eyes.
 Slumber sealed her eyes.
 Soon she succumbed to sleep.

She woke up to a dream.
 She woke up to a dream.
 Goddess Bhavani appeared in her dream.

‘How can you sleep at this hour, O Deval?
 How can you sleep at this hour?
 Ill has befallen the world.’

‘Husband and wife will be separated, O Deval.
 Husband and wife will be separated.
 They will never meet again.’

The dream spoke of future adversity.
 The dream spoke of future adversity.
 It indicated impending disaster.

Bhim stretched on the couch.
 He stretched on the couch.
 His head nestled on her bosom.



They played a game of dice.
 They played a game of dice.
 They engaged in a game of dice.

(An accompanist: O, how she dreamt! The lead singer: Yes, it really was so.)

He reclined on her bosom, O Bhim.
 He reclined on her bosom.
 How he caressed her!

(An accompanist: She was cross with him. The lead singer: Yes, indeed it was so.)

Bhavani, the Goddess, appeared in her dream.
 Bhavani, the Goddess, appeared in her dream.
 ‘O Deval, you’ll be separated from your beloved.’

Jeevta!

O maharaj!

The Khensis plundered Bhagania. The Charans were massacred. (*Tambur*) Deval went to her palace in the evening. She sat on the pile of flowers. The air was fragrant with the scent of musk. The fragrance lulled her to sleep. The maids gently fanned her with their frilled hand-fans. On the silken mattress Deval lay fast asleep. The Rathor princess was sleeping on a bed of flowers. In the second quarter of the night, Deval woke up to a dream. Goddess Bhavani appeared to her. *O maharaj!* ‘How can you sleep at this hour? You have forsaken your consort. You’ve made a mistake. O wench, you are about to reap the fruits of your ill deed. You’ll be separated from your consort forever. Your husband is killed. You are widowed at a young age.’ Thus spoke the Goddess. In a short while Deval had another dream. Her husband appeared before her. Bhim slept alongside her on the couch. They played and frolicked for sometime. They played a game of dice. Bhim playfully stroked his wife and rested his head on her breast.



O maharaj! But Goddess Bhavani interrupted the dream, ‘O woman, how can you lie in slumber at this hour? You are separated from your spouse. Your husband’s kin are slaughtered ruthlessly. You are widowed and orphaned. Your husband’s folks are dead. Your brothers too have passed away. O wench! Banish the sleep from your eyes. Make haste and hurry.’ Deval sprang to her feet. She stumbled from her couch. Her heart thumped violently. ‘What did I see? Wasn’t Bhim caressing me? Where did he go?’ She moved around anxiously. She looked for him in all four corners. No one was around, not a soul.

O maharaj! She pondered for a while. ‘For six months I banished him from my thoughts. And today he has come to haunt my dream. How he caressed me! How lovingly he leaned upon me! Why did he appear in my dream? And the second dream revealed that he is dead. Indeed, this is a bad omen.’ *O maharaj!* Deval reclined on her bed. Slumber sealed her eyes again. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Deval was asleep in the palace of clouds.

Deval was asleep in the palace of clouds.

She was asleep on her high couch.

Slumber sealed her eyes.

Slumber sealed her eyes.

Her husband appeared in her dream.

The dream spoke of future adversity.

The dream spoke of future adversity.

Impending disaster it revealed.

Deval was separated from her husband.

She was separated from her husband.

Husband and wife were separated.

Never estrange your relation.

Never estrange your relation.

Never separate from your spouse.



A man becomes angry at times.
 A man becomes angry at times.
 One's spouse may treat one harshly at times.
 But a house without a husband,
 A house without a husband,
 A home without one's spouse grows dismal.

 The home becomes an alien place.
 It becomes an alien place.
 One can't live without one's husband.
 A husband's home is one's retreat.
 A husband's home is one's retreat.
 One must not sever ties with one's consort.
 Bhim appeared in Deval's dream.
 He appeared in her dream.
 He stroked her playfully.
 Deval sprang to her feet.
 She sprang to her feet.
 She looked around for him.
 Deval beat her breasts in despair.
 She beat her breasts in despair.
 'O Bhim, the wretched man disturbed my sleep.'
 She repented being away from him.
 She repented being away from him.
 'Why did I sever my relationship with him?'
 'Reunite me with my spouse,' prayed Deval.
 'Reunite me with my spouse.'
 O God, please reunite us in this life.'
 Deval implored the Goddess.
 She implored the Goddess.
 'O Mother Bhavani, reunite me with my Bhim.'



Never strain your relations.
 Never strain your relations.
 You mustn't break up with your spouse.
 Such wenches should die before their time.
 Such wenches should die before their time.
 Those who forsake their spouses should be damned.
 Deval sprang to her feet.
 Deval sprang to her feet.
 She opened the doors of the granary.
 She took some wheat from a jar.
 She took some wheat from a jar.
 She took out the best variety of grains.
 She sat down at the grinding stone.
 She sat down at the grinding stone.
 She set to grind wheat.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Deval had a dream. She sprang to her feet. She searched every nook and corner. But she didn't find a soul. She pondered for a while, 'I have been away from my spouse for six months. Never did I think of him. Never did he appear in my dreams. But today he haunted my sleep. We were sitting together on the couch. Was the dream hinting at something?' Once again she went to bed. Soon she fell asleep. She slept on a bed of flowers. She lay on a silk mattress. *O maharaj!* Goddess Bhavani appeared in her dream. She spoke about imminent misfortune. Ill was done in the world. As the Goddess disappeared, Bhim appeared before her. He slept alongside her. They played the game of dice. Deval cherished the memory of the dream. *O maharaj!* Bhim rested his head on her breasts. He stroked her playfully. O God forbid, husband and wife should never be separated. Deval will be parted from her spouse forever. Many people come to earth, but no one can substitute the place of one's spouse. *Khama!*
(Tambur) O brother, I must share some words of wisdom with you.



One should learn from experiences of others. One should never strain relations with one's consort. One should not turn away from one's kin. One should be warm and genial to all. No one is born immortal. Your wrong deeds are never going to redeem you.

O maharaj! Deval had severed her relationship with her spouse. She had turned away from him. Curse befall her! May all such strumpets be cursed! She had made a mistake. One should not be upset with one's spouse even for a day, but she had been away from her husband for six months! Now her husband had died at the hands of his enemy. The Khensis had plundered his land and killed him. *O maharaj!* The dream spoke to Deval. It spoke of impending misfortune. Deval felt startled. She looked around for Bhim. *O maharaj!* She fell crumpled. She hid her face between her knees. She wept bitterly, 'I have made a mistake. My fate made me err. I was out of my senses. I've been away from Bhim for six months. O merciful God! Today he appeared in my dream. How I long to see him! Why can't the night wear out? Why does morning seem so far away?'

O maharaj! She wept and wailed. Like the monsoon showers in the month of Shravan, tears streamed down Deval's eyes. She tossed and turned in bed. The waking cock's crowing heralded the day. The first streak of light brightened the sky. Deval sprang to her feet. She unlocked the door of the granary. She took off the lid from a jar. She took out a basketful of wheat. She sat at the grinding stone. She tended to the grinding. She ground the grains to make fine wheat flour. Then she turned to other household work. 'No one can take the place of one's husband. Who can replace the father of one's children? I have erred. But today, I'll patch up with Bhim,' she thought.

Deval lit the cooking fire.

Deval lit the cooking fire.

She wanted to cook a sweet dish.

She made some *churmu*.

She made some *churmu*.



She prepared Bhim's favourite sweet.

She mixed jaggery and ghee.

She mixed jaggery and ghee.

She made the choicest sweet.

(An accompanist. O, it is so smooth that it will effortlessly glide down his throat. The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

For the sake of her husband,

For the sake of her husband,

She generously poured ghee.

(An accompanist: She is late to come to her senses. The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

To please her spouse,

To please her spouse,

Deval smeared her eyes with black-kohl.

She was clad in a sari that suited her best.

She wore a sari that suited her best.

With a kerchief she tied her hair.

She chose a blouse that suited her best.

She chose a blouse that suited her best.

She wore a befitting blouse.

She picked the best necklace.

She picked the best necklace.

She adorned her neck with a necklace.

A nose-ring glittered on her nose.

A nose-ring glittered on her nose.

She put a red mark on her forehead.

With the point of a spear,

With the point of a spear,

She applied kohl to her eyes with the spear's tip.



A pair of ear-studs,
 A pair of ear-studs,
 Her ears were adorned with ear-studs.
 Pearls sparkled in her locks.
 Pearls sparkled in her locks.
 Pearls were weaved in her locks.
 She was clad in a sari that suited her best.
 She was clad in a sari that suited her best.
 In a gorgeous sari she was clad.
 She adorned herself in many ways.
 She adorned herself in many ways.
 But she was adorned for a dead man!
 She dressed to please her spouse.
 She dressed to please her spouse.
 She took pains to appear beautiful.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Deval made some churmu and put it in a vessel. She took an earthenware filled with buttermilk. She adorned herself attractively. She put on a pretty skirt and tied her hair with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that went well with her and picked a necklace that suited her best. She adorned herself with great care. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) She stood in front of a mirror. She watched her reflection with satisfaction. She smeared her eyes with black-kohl and put a red mark on her forehead. A nose ring glittered on her nose and a pair of studs adorned her ears. Pearls sparkled in her locks. She was dressed in full pomp and splendour. Her skin was of deep golden hue. It shone like a fresh flower in bloom. The biting eastern wind swept across her delicate face. She looked like an apsara that had strayed to this land of the mortals. She wanted to please her husband. She took along tasty delicacies for Bhim. She said aloud, 'O maids, I am going to be reconciled with my husband.' May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.



With a group of maids trailing behind,
 With a group of maids trailing behind,
 Deval set off with her maids.

Deval arrived at a forest so green.
 She arrived at a forest so green.
 She reached a thick forest.

‘Why are your legs painted red, O kite?
 Why are your legs painted red?
 Why are your legs the colour of blood?’

‘Your beak is smeared with blood, O kite.
 Your beak is smeared with blood.
 Why does your beak look bloody?’

Thus spoke Deval,
 Thus she spoke,
 ‘O kite, listen to me.’

‘With what have you painted your beak, O sister?
 With what have you painted your beak?
 Your beak is painted red.’

‘Tell me the truth, O sister.
 Tell me the truth.
 Please don’t hold back anything.’

‘My beak is smeared with blood, O Deval,’ said the kite.
 ‘It is smeared with blood.
 I’ve feasted on blood.’

(An accompanist: Don’t lie, O kite. The lead singer: The kite
 will tell the truth.)

‘I will clothe your body, O kite.
 I will clothe your body.
 Speak the truth and I’ll clothe you in white fabric.’



‘Be my solemnly accepted sister, O kite.
Be my solemnly accepted sister.
You are my adopted sister.’

Thus spoke the kite,
Thus she spoke,
‘O sister, listen to what I say.’

(An accompanist: O sister, a great catastrophe has struck. The
lead singer: Yes, you said it right.)

‘The chief has died, O Deval.
The chief has died.
The chief of the Charan clan is no more.’

‘In a river of blood, O sister,
In a river of blood,
I dipped my beak in a river of blood.’

Deval beat her breasts.
She beat her breasts.
She walked anxiously with hasty steps.

Deval arrived at Bhagania.
She arrived at Bhagania.
She moved about in Bhagania.

The place looked ghastly and desolate.
The place looked ghastly and desolate.
It looked dreary in the absence of Bhim.

Streams of blood flowed in the streets.
Streams of blood flowed in the streets.
The place was flooded with blood.

Human heads lay scattered.
Human heads lay scattered.
The heads of Charans lay everywhere.



The heads of her brothers- in-law,
 The heads of her brothers-in-law,
 The heads of Bhim's brothers came to her sight.

She moved around the place over and again.
 She moved around the place over and again.
 But she could not find her husband's head.

'Could Bhim, the nasty fellow, have run away to save his life?
 Could that nasty man have run away to save his life?
 Did he turn his back to the enemy?' wondered Deval.

The head of Bhim,
 The head of Bhim,
 It was half sunk in mud.

She saw his head.
 She saw his head.
 The tuft of his turban caught her eyes.

She slumped on her haunches.
 She slumped on her haunches.
 She dug out her beloved's half sunken head.

The upturned moustache and bushy eyebrows of Bhim,
 The upturned moustache and bushy eyebrows of Bhim,
 She looked for other familiar signs.

'You have left me behind, O wicked man!
 You have left me behind.
 For forever you've bid me farewell,' exclaimed she.

(An accompanist: It is all written in one's fate. The lead singer:
 You said it right.)

'You appeared in my dreams, O Bhim.
 You appeared in my dreams.
 O, we played a game of dice!'



‘The man with upturned moustache, O Bhim,
The man with upturned moustache,
Your like cannot be found on earth.’

Deval was cross with Bhim.
She was cross with him.
She had severed their relationship.

‘I forsook you for no reason, O Bhim.
I forsook you for no reason.
For six months I lived away from you.’

‘When shall we re-unite, O Bhim?
When shall we re-unite?
In which birth shall we meet again?’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

With five maids in front and five trailing behind, Deval took the way to Bhagania. Her anklets jingled as she walked. She moved with a sprightly gait. Her flowing strides seemed to reach out, as if she was walking across the earth. She walked along with her maids. Frolicking, they went along. They arrived amidst a forest. A hovering kite, with bloodstained beak, caught their sight. Deval asked, ‘O kite, be my solemnly adopted sister. Why don’t you come down?’ The kite swooped down and perched on the stump of a tree. *Khama!*

(Tambur) Deval said, ‘O sister, with what have you painted your beak?’ ‘O sister, my beak got stained with the blood of the umbilical cords of new-born calves at Bhagania,’ replied the kite. *O maharaj!* ‘You are my solemnly adopted sister,’ said Deval, ‘I’ll drape your body with fine cloth. Please do not hold back the truth.’ Deval clothed the kite with a white blouse. The bird bears that sign since then. The kite said after a while, ‘O Deval, I’ll tell you the truth. A great catastrophe has struck Gadh Gujhanian. Ill has been done in the world. People have been slaughtered. Bhagania too has not been spared. It looks desolate. Streams of blood flow in its alleys. Stones roll along with the blood. I’ve feasted on the rotting flesh of the Charan



chief. I've dipped my beak in his congealed blood.'

(*Tambur*) Deval pondered for a while. Ill has been done in the world. She turned to her companions, 'O maids, return to your homes.' She hitched high her sari and took off all her adornments. Hurriedly, she tore the way. She walked through the alleyways of Bhagania. Crows and kites were feasting on the dead bodies. Human heads lay scattered on the ground. Lacerated limbs and lifeless bodies lay strewn everywhere. (*Tambur*) Deval moved about. She came across the heads of Bhim's brothers. She pondered for a while, 'All my brothers-in-law have been slain. Their heads lie half-sunk in the ground. But there is no trace of Bhim. Did the scum flee away in fright? Has he been a coward? All our kin have laid down their lives. But the family chief is nowhere to be seen.' She looked everywhere for Bhim's body. She arrived at the cow-shed. A red turban, half-hidden from the eye, caught her sight. Deval bent to have a closer look. *O maharaj!* The upturned moustache and broad visage! The sight of Bhim's thick eyebrows and big, round eyes brought tears to her eyes. She wept and wailed.

(*Tambur*) She dug out the half sunk head. The dust kicked by the cows had settled on his visage. Deval spoke aloud, 'O mind your steps, here lies the chief of our clan. He is the chief cowherd. His manly voice still echoes in my ears. Walk with watchful steps, lest you stumble over his head.' Thus she cried and lamented. Bhim's head was covered by the dust kicked by the cows. The Khensis had driven away the cattle. Bhim had laid down his life for the sake of the cows. Deval unearthed his head and nestled it in her lap. She lamented, 'O Bhim, you were the tiger of this land. Ill has been done in the world. We are separated. Yesterday night you appeared in my dream. You slept alongside me. But today I'm left alone in this world. We are separated forever. Many men walk on this earth but you are matchless. You were father to my children. They may have uncles and cousins but they are now fatherless. In which birth shall we meet again? O Bhim, you wicked man, you've deceived me. But was it your fault? Nay, I'm to be blamed. For six months, I stayed away from you.' Deval beat her breasts hard and cried her eyes out.



She pondered for a while, 'One will not get one's due unless one claims it. One will starve to death if one will not ask for one's share. Tears won't take you anywhere. To eke out a living, one needs to toil. The same way, one needs to wreak vengeance to square a revenge.'

O maharaj! Deval thought for sometime, 'You can't recover your loss by shedding tears.' Determined, she hitched high her long skirt and strapped it tightly around her waist. She clad herself in a black sari. She took off all her adornments. She had put on jewellery to please her husband. She changed into a widow's attire. That is the custom of the land. A wife without her husband holds no position in society. Even a worthless woman is respected while her husband is alive. But if a woman, who has lost her husband, wears expensive clothes, she is called a whore. People despise such women.

Deval wailed and wept.

She wailed and wept.

She lamented bitterly.

Husband and wife were separated.

Husband and wife were separated.

Husband and wife had parted forever.

She trod along the way.

She trod along the way.

Hurriedly, she came to Gadh Gujhanian.

She went to her brother's house.

She went to her brother's house.

She arrived at Buro's palace.

Thus spoke Deval,

Thus she spoke,

'O brother, listen to what I say.'

'How can you sleep at this hour, O brother?

How can you sleep at this hour?

How can you succumb to slumber?'



'Bhagania has been plundered, O brother.
 Bhagania has been plundered.
 Streams of blood flow through its alleyways.'

'People have been killed, O brother.
 People have been killed.
 Ill has been done in the world.'

Thus spoke Buro,
 Thus he spoke,
 'O sister, listen to what I say.'

'My throat is inflamed, O sister.
 My throat is inflamed.
 My throat has been sore for days.'

'How can I shout for help, O sister?
 How can I shout for help?
 I have been taken ill.'

Deval felt offended.
 Deval felt offended.
 Buro's words annoyed her.

'I curse you now and here, O Buro.
 I curse you now and here.
 May you indeed be struck with illness.'

(Tambur)

'O brother, how can you be asleep at this hour? Ill has been done in the world. The people of Bhagania have been slaughtered. And here you are, you scum, you lie in slumber! Banish the sleep from your eyes and venture out,' shouted Deval. *O maharaj!* Thus spoke Deval and Buro listened to her. 'O brother, the Khensis have plundered Bhagania. Jhendaro attacked our land. He has slain people as one would reap corn. Streams of blood flow through the streets of Bhagania. Heavy stones roll along with the river of blood. Chando



and Pabu sojourn in a distant land. Pabu has gone to Sonagar to wed his bride. Why don't you shout aloud his name? The sound would reach the distant land, it would reverberate in Pabu's ears. He'll come to my help.' Buro replied, 'O sister of mine, how can I shout? My throat is inflamed. My voice has gone hoarse. I am helpless.' *Khama (Tambur)* ²⁵Deval said with disdain, 'O Buro, may you be condemned to hell. You've let me down. I'm in distress. What can one expect of a brother who fails to stand by his sister when she is in difficulty? May you rot in hell.' *O maharaj!* Deval continued, 'I'll curse you for telling a lie. Your throat will forever remain sore in this life and in births to come.' Thus Deval cursed her brother. Hurriedly, she tore the way to a drum beater's house. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Deval came to the drum beater's place.
She came to the drum beater's place.
At the drumbeater's place she arrived.

Deval called out to him.
She called out to him.
'O brother, listen to what I say.'

'Are you asleep or awake, O brother?
Are you asleep or awake?
Come out if you're not asleep.'

'I was not asleep, O sister,' said he.
'I was not asleep.
'I was tossing and turning in bed.'

'Why have you come at this hour, O sister?
Why have you come at this hour?
What has brought you here in the middle of the night?'

'How can you be in bed at this time, O brother?
How can you be in bed at this time?
How can slumber seal your eyes?'



(*Tambur*)

Deval said to the drum beater, 'The enemy has plundered Bhagania. People are slain. And here you are asleep in the safety of your house! Chando and Pabu, my brothers, sojourn in a distant land. Beat your drum hard and loud. The sound will reach Pabu, it will reverberate in his ears. And my brave brothers will come to my help.' *Khama!* (*Tambur*). The drum beater said, 'O sister, ill has been done in the world. Blisters have been ailing me for some time. They cause severe pain. My hands are swollen. I can't even hold my drum. How can I beat it hard and loud?' ²⁶Deval said with disdain, 'O brother, don't make excuses when I am in distress. Don't let me down with your petty problems. An ox that refuses to work during the harvest season is worthless. A pretty dame who won't cook food for her family gets thrown out of the house. A tall and stout husband that beats his wife frequently is often forsaken. A fair and healthy son that fails to take care of his parents in their old age or a daughter that drags her family name in mud are better dead than alive. I curse you, O brother, for refusing to help me in my time of trouble. May your hands remain swollen and suppurating forever. May they hurt you throughout your life.' Thus Deval cursed the drum beater. She pondered for a while, 'Sonagar is very far from here. How do I send word to my brothers?' She collected herself. She tied a piece of cloth around her waist. Determined, she took the way of Sonagar. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Pabu arrived at the wedding-pavilion.

He arrived at the wedding-pavilion.

The sound of music welcomed him.

Pabu circled the sacred fire.

He circled the sacred fire.

He went around the sacred fire.

The women sang customary songs.

They sang customary songs.

Ceremonial songs were sung.



Anxiously, with hasty steps,
 Anxiously, with hasty steps,
 Deval walked with anxious steps.

Deval arrived at the outskirts of Sonagar.
 She arrived at the outskirts of Sonagar.
 Chando was looking around with watchful eyes.

Chando was on his guard.
 He was on his guard.
 His eyes were gazing the distance.

‘Why is she breathless?’ thought he.
 ‘Why is she breathless?’
 Alone and forlorn she comes.’

Chando went forward to receive Deval.
 He went forward to receive her.
 He went to meet his sister.

Thus spoke Chando,
 Thus he spoke,
 ‘O sister, listen to what I say.’

Deval cried her eyes out.
 She cried her eyes out.
 She wept and lamented.

Thus spoke Deval,
 Thus she spoke,
 ‘Hundred-and-forty Charans lie dead.’

‘Ill has been done in the world, O brother.
 Ill has been done in the world.
 I am in distress.’

‘The enemy has plundered, O brother.
 The enemy has plundered.
 The Khensis have attacked Bhagania.’



‘The place looks deserted and desolate, O brother.
The place looks deserted and desolate.
Streams of blood flow in the alleyways.’

Chando returned to the wedding pavilion.
He returned to the wedding-pavilion.
He came anxiously with hasty steps.

Chando stopped Pabu.
He stopped Pabu.
He told Pabu what had happened.

Chando narrated the tale of disaster.
He narrated the tale of disaster.
He broke the news of the catastrophe.

Pabuji drew out a dagger from his waistband.
He drew out a dagger from his waistband.
Swiftly he pulled out his dagger.

With a flourish he cut the bridal-knot.
With a flourish he cut the bridal-knot.
He cut the knot in a swift stroke.

A sudden gleam flared as he flaunted the dagger.
A sudden gleam flared as he flaunted the dagger.
The flash penetrated his bride’s womb.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Deval tied a piece of cloth around her waist. She tucked the end of her sari. Anxiously, with hasty steps she took the way to Sonagar. Hastily, she tore the way. The wedding rites of Pabu were being performed. He was circling the altar. The womenfolk were singing ceremonial songs. Sounds of *shehnai* and drums were heard. The dancers danced joyfully. The entertainers delighted people with various skills. Musical instruments were being played. The vevans aimed banter at one other. Chando was looking around with watchful



eyes. He saw Deval at a distance. He pondered for a while. 'O, Deval looks annoyed! But she didn't tell us that she was coming. Why is she tearing the way in such haste? She is Deval, no doubt. But why is she in the inauspicious guise of jharkhu? Why is she dressed in black?' Chando went forward to receive his sister. He met her midway and asked, 'O sister, you didn't come with the wedding procession! Why are you in such clothes?' *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) Deval tried to speak but tears choked her voice. Like the constant rain during the months of Shravan and Bhadarva, tears streamed down her eyes. Chando said again, 'O sister, what ails you? Tell me the tale of your woes.' *O maharaj!* Deval said, 'O brother, ill has been done in the world. Bhagania has been plundered. Gadh Gujhanian has also been assaulted. Streams of blood flow in its streets. Heavy stones drift along with the river of blood. The place looks deserted and ghastly. Not a single soul has survived.' *O maharaj!* Thus spoke Deval and Chando listened intently.

(*Tambur*) Pabu was performing his wedding rites. He was circling the fire. Chando stopped him abruptly. He told him about the catastrophe, 'O brother, ill has been done in the world. The Khensis have attacked. Bhagania has been plundered. People are slaughtered. Deval has come here, seeking our help. Tears flow ceaselessly from her eyes. What should we do in such circumstances?' *O maharaj!* On learning the news, Pabu drew out his dagger. He pulled it out from his waistband. He cut the bridal-knot with a flourish. A gleam flared as he wielded the dagger. It penetrated deep into the bride's womb. People stood startled. Pabu stepped out of the wedding pavilion. He patted Kesar Kalmi, the mare. He quickly tightened the stirrups. Chando mounted his well-bred colt. Pabu and Chando rode on their horses. The horses sped, as if flying without wings. Clouds of dust arose as they went by. Their hoofs hit hard against the ground. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The Khensis reached a place called Amba-Jamun.

They reached Amba-Jamun.



They were tired and weary after a long journey.

With the tip of a spear they spread out rugs.

With the tip of a spear they spread out rugs.

Grey and white rugs were spread.

Green and yellow rugs,

Green and yellow rugs,

They spread rugs on the ground.

They sat on the rugs.

They sat on the rugs.

On the colourful rugs they sat.

They prepared an opium-drink.

They prepared an opium-drink.

From cupped palms they drank.

They chilled themselves.

They chilled themselves.

Under the hot noon sun they cooled themselves.

Thus spoke Jhendaro,

Thus he spoke,

‘O chieftains, listen to what I say.’

‘We’ve plundered Bhagania, O chieftains.

We’ve plundered Bhagania.

We massacred many people there.’

‘I killed my own brother-in-law, O brothers.

I killed my own brother-in-law.

Hundred-and-forty Charans we slayed.’

‘Hundred-and-forty were they, O brothers.

Hundred-and-forty were they.

We massacred them all.’

‘We snatched away what was rightfully ours, O brothers.



We snatched away what was ours.’
Thus he spoke to his uncles and cousins.

The pair of brothers,
The pair of brothers,
The brothers were listening.

O maharaj!

It was a hot afternoon. Jhendaro Khensi spoke aloud, ‘O brothers, O warriors, the midday sun is scorching hot. We must cool ourselves with opium-drink. Dismount from your horses and rest under a tree.’ They spread yellow rugs with the pointed tips of their spears. They sat on colourful rugs. Opium drink was prepared. It was passed from hand to hand. They drank from their cupped palms. (*Tambur*) Jhendaro Khensi said, ‘O brothers, only your own kin will stand by you in difficult times. No family prospers if its brothers are not united. May God bless our unity. We attacked Gadh Gujhanian. We plundered Bhaganian. Hundred and forty Charans lie massacred. They died an ignominious death. They died the death of dogs. Bhim, the Charan chief, tried to outwit me. He was the husband to my wife’s sister, yet I killed him mercilessly. We claimed what was promised to my wife in dowry. I would not have won but for your support. A lone man cannot accomplish anything. May our solidarity flourish. Only a brother will die for a brother. Only your own brother will come forward to fight for you. A brother will wipe away your woes. O, how we massacred the Charans!’ Thus the Khensi king bragged and boasted. Chando and Pabu arrived at that moment. They came riding on their horses.

O maharaj! They stood barring the way. They listened with care to each and every word. The alleys of Amba-Jamun were in commotion. Pabu and Chando sighed with grief. They were infuriated. They listened intently to the Khensi king.

‘You plundered the slumberous town of Bhaganian, O brother-in-law.



You plundered the slumberous town of Bhagania.
You laid an ambush on Bhagania.'

'You returned with the booty, O brother-in-law.
You returned with the booty.
You attacked a sleeping enemy.'

'At the hands of their kin, O brother-in-law,
At the hands of their kin,
The Charans died at the hands of their relatives.'

'Do not brag about your bravery, you swine.
Do not brag about your bravery.
We have come to take revenge.'

The Khensis had drunk opium-drinks.
They had drunk opium-drinks.
They had drunk from cupped palms.

Chando attacked the enemy line.
He attacked the enemy line.
The infuriated Rathor prince assaulted the enemy.

Swords struck like lightning.
Swords struck like lightning.
The Rathors slew the Khensis.

Mercilessly, they killed the Khensis.
Mercilessly, they killed the Khensis.
The Khensis were assaulted ruthlessly.

Jhendaro ran for his life.
He ran for his life.
He hid amidst the thicket of the karmadi plants.

Chando was hot on his trail.
He was hot on his trail.
He pursued the Khensi king.



O maharaj!

Jhendaro gloated about his bravery. His words pierced the Rathor princes. Ill was done in the world. Chando could not stand his sight anymore. He bellowed, 'O you low-bred wretch, mind your words. Stop bragging. The tigers of the land were on prowl elsewhere. You attacked our land when we were away. Or else you might not have survived to gloat. But now you'll experience my wrath.'

O maharaj! The Rathors were enraged. They slew the fleeing Khensi warriors. The Khensis were beheaded ruthlessly. Their bodies were cut never to join again. Their limbs were lacerated in a mad frenzy. Jhendaro Khensi ran for his life. Chando chased him in anger. Jhendaro tried to give him the slip. Chando followed him. Jhendaro hid in the thicket of the karmadi plants. *O maharaj!* Chando brandished his fiery spear. But Pabu, the crown prince, intervened, 'O Chando, hold back your spear. He is our sister's husband. We don't want to wipe the vermilion mark from our sister's forehead. We don't want to see her in mourning clothes. Hold yourself.' Thus Jhendaro was spared. *O maharaj!* Chando pondered for a while, 'O brother, Jhendaro is like a cobra in coil. Spare an enemy and breed enmity forever. Don't stop me, brother, I will take his life.' 'O hold on, check your weapon. We want to see our sister in dazzling attire. Spare his life for God's sake,' said Pabu. *O maharaj!* Reluctantly, Chando sheathed his sword. The Khensi king said in a timid voice, 'What has happened cannot be undone, but let us bury our feud here and now.' Chando said with disdain, 'You low-bred swine, you have tarnished your name. You destroyed Bhagania and attacked Gadh Gujhanian. We are relatives by marriage. We would have given you anything had you asked us. But you shed blood for no reason. Let us turn our backs to past events. But never dare to do so again. Leave this place at the earliest.'

O maharaj! A crestfallen Jhendaro left with heavy steps. The Rathors saddled their horses and trotted back to Gadh Gujhanian. The signs of destruction were evident everywhere. The lifeless bodies of the Charans lay scattered. The Rathors said, 'The Khensi king has



brought calamity on us. The damage cannot be undone. But we have taken vengeance. We have settled the score. A Bhil's revenge never gets old. We have squared the account.' *O maharaj!* The Rathors returned to their palaces. They ate, drank and enjoyed life. Jhendaro Khensi came out of the thicket. His horse had suffered the Rathor's wrath. His legs and tail were ripped off. The Khensi king staggered to his feet. He walked back home. He arrived at the marketplace. He walked through the alleys. People gathered in the streets. They were stunned and surprised. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

People asked their king,

They asked their king,

'Why are you alone?'

'Where had you gone, O Jhendaro?

Where had you gone?

Where is the dowry you promised to bring?'

'Where are your companions, O Jhendaro?

Where are your companions?

Where are the other warriors?'

'Why have you left them behind, O king?

Why have you left them behind?

Where are your uncles and cousins?'

'Your closest kin, O king.

Your closest kin.

Where are your relatives?'

The women of Jhayeria,

The women of Jhayeria,

They asked him many questions.

(An accompanist: Why is he alone? The lead singer: You know why.)



'Where is my child's father, O king?

Where is my child's father?

Why have you left him behind?'

Jhendaro burned with shame.

He burned with shame.

Averting his eyes he trudged along.

Sighing and lamenting he went.

Sighing and lamenting he went.

He was burning with shame.

The women of Jhayeria loathed him.

The women of Jhayeria loathed him.

'O king, may you perish for your sins.'

'Our husbands died for your sake, O king.

Our husbands died for your sake.

May you be damned for your wrong deeds.'

'You went to claim your promised gifts, O king.

You went to claim your promised gifts.

But death claimed the lives of our men.'

Bitter are the fruits of feud.

Bitter are the fruits of feud.

The king's aunts and bhabhis taunted him.

The wives of his relatives,

The wives of his relatives,

The consorts of his kin jeered at him.

Women folk wept and wailed in his court.

They wept and wailed in his court.

They beat their breasts in his assembly.

'Our children are orphaned,' said they.

'Our children are orphaned.

They are rendered fatherless.'



(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

King Jhendaro walked barefoot. He trudged along the path. Crestfallen and dejected, he arrived at Jhayeria. He had twirled his moustache upward when he left. Surrounded by scores of men, he had left with pomp and splendor. But he now returned alone and unattended. *Baku pharu bakalaru.*²⁷ The Khensi king was cut to his size. The women and children saw him entering the town. ‘O here comes the king, but where are his horses, where are our brave warriors?’

O maharaj! The women ran to meet him midway. ‘Why are you alone, O king? You had departed with an army.’ The king could not utter a word. What could he say? With his head bent low, he waded his way. The women asked over and again. ‘O king, where are your uncles and cousins? Where are the brave warriors who had accompanied you?’ Tears trickled from the king’s eye. Defeated and crestfallen he lumbered on. ‘O he is sly and wicked! He won’t admit that he had our men killed,’ said the women. The wives of his uncle and cousins asked, ‘O damn, tell us the truth. Where are the fathers of our children?’ But what could Jhendaro say? Embarrassed and ashen-faced, he made his way. The women wept and wailed, ‘May you be banished to hell! You wretched man, you left to claim your promised dowry. But you’ve returned empty-handed. Our children are orphaned because of your whim.’ *O maharaj!* The children and their mothers lamented aloud.

The king stealthily entered his palace. He confined himself to a dark corner. The queen inquired, ‘O king, what happened? You were supposed to bring the promised gifts. But you’ve returned empty-handed.’ The king was silent. How could he utter a word? He was burning with agony. He said, ‘O queen, don’t ask any questions. But for you, I would not be alive. Chando would have taken my life. May God bless my elder brother-in-law. He asked Chando to spare my life. Our army is destroyed. My brave warriors are dead; their bodies lie scattered in the wilderness. No one is left alive. The horses are mutilated. The Rathors have struck off their tails and turned



them away in the forest. With much difficulty I made my return.’ The king and the queen sat confined in the darkest corner. The king dared not venture out. Such is the fruit of feud. The women of the family loathed and cursed him. All his uncles and cousins were killed. The womenfolk wept and wailed incessantly. Jhayeria was drowned in tears. Everyone was gripped by grief. Jhendaro suffered agony for a couple of months. Taunts and insults mounted on his nerves. He was smarting under the humiliation. He pondered, ‘What is ordained cannot be reverted. Those who died cannot be brought back. People jeer at me day and night. I must do something. I must find a way out.’ The king was hurt by the malicious words.

The king was pierced by the insults.

He was pierced by the insults.

The taunts of the womenfolk pricked him.

The wives of his brothers and uncles,

The wives of his brothers and uncles,

They held him responsible for the catastrophe.

Jhendaro heard them talking.

He heard them talking.

People spoke ill of him.

‘Tema is the cause of this doom,’ they said.

‘She is the cause of this doom.

May she be condemned.’

‘The devil’s messenger is she.

The devil’s messenger is she.

She has brought doom on her kin.’

Jhendaro pondered for a while.

He pondered for a while.

He thought for sometime.

‘See what I’m still capable of doing.

See what I’m still capable of doing.



I'm slain by slanders.'

He sent a messenger.

He sent a messenger.

A messenger set out with a message.

The millers and the cobblers,

The millers and the cobblers,

They were summoned to court.

An army of millers and cobblers,

An army of millers and cobblers,

He prepared an army of his vassals.

(*Tambur*)

One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be very auspicious. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro, the Khensi, was consumed by agony. He summoned his vassals. He summoned the cobblers, the millers and the dancers. He asked the horse keeper to bring out his horse. He decided to mount an attack on Gadh Gujhania. He yearned to take revenge. But he deceived his people. 'We will go to Gadh Gujhania to resolve the feud. We've suffered the consequences of the battle. We shall reconcile with our relatives. O brothers, we will restore harmony. What has happened has happened. But reconciliation is the need of the time. My brothers-in-law should not be at war with me.' *O maharaj!* Jhendaro gathered an army. He saddled his horse. Guns from Bundikot were held aloft. The blades of their swords were sharpened. He set out with his army in the name of harmony and peace. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Thus spoke Jhendaro,

Thus he spoke,

'O Tema, listen to what I say.'

'Your brothers and I are enemies.

Your brothers and I are enemies.



Enmity prevails between us.'

'We have quarreled on several occasions.

We have quarreled on several occasions.

We are sworn enemies.'

'I want to resolve the feud.

I want to resolve the feud.

I'll restore peace.'

Jhendaro saddled his horse.

He saddled his horse.

He trotted along the road.

Hurriedly, they tore the way,

Hurriedly, they tore the way.

They travelled on horseback.

Clouds of dust arose as they passed.

Clouds of dust arose as they passed.

They kicked clouds of dust.

They arrived at the Amba-Jamun grove.

They arrived at the Amba-Jamun grove.

They stopped at the Amba-Jamun grove.

Thus spoke Jhendaro,

Thus he spoke,

'O brothers, listen to what I say.'

'The Rathors caught me unawares, O brothers.

They caught me unawares.

They attacked me from behind my back.'

(An accompanist: They were killed with swords. The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

'Mercilessly they butchered our men, O brothers.

Mercilessly they butchered us.

They mutilated our horses.'



Thus Jhendaro provoked his men.

He provoked his men.

He incited them to take revenge.

They saddled their horses.

They saddled their horses.

They arrived at the pasturage of Jhenjhanian.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhendaro mounted his horse and took the reins in his hand. The Khensis tore their way in haste. Clouds of dust arose as they passed. The hoofs of the horses hit hard against the ground. They travelled at the speed of light. They arrived at the Amba-Jamun grove in a flash. *O maharaj!* Jhendaro spoke to his men, 'O brothers, I implore you to listen. We've suffered at the hands of destiny. But don't blame me. When we were returning to Jhayeria, carrying the promised dowry, the Rathors charged on us. We did not want to fight against the Rathors. We had been to Bhagania. We had plundered the Charans. I had killed my brother-in-law as he refused to give my share of the dowry. We drove away their cows, nine lac in all. Here, at this spot, we were resting for a while. We prepared opium-drinks. We were under the sway of liquor. Pabu and Chando attacked us furtively. They butchered our men in vengeance. Ruthlessly, they beheaded our brothers. They slaughtered my uncles and cousins. Alas! How so ever hard I try, I cannot forget the sight.' Thus he provoked his men. In order to invoke hatred he lied to them. The fire of revenge was still burning within him. What is bred in the bone will come out in flesh. A Bhil never forgets to take revenge. 'I want to avenge the death of my kin. I will not spare those who have afflicted scores of wounds on me. I'll lead you to Gadhi Gujhanian. We'll return if victorious, or like valiant warriors we'll embrace death. You must not deter from your oath. The Rathors have killed our brothers. We'll plunder their land. We'll square the account and return.'

(Tambur) O maharaj! O, how cleverly Jhendaro provoked his men!



‘O brothers, you were not present to see how our men were butchered. I hid inside a thicket. With much difficulty I escaped. O brothers, be true to your salt. Don’t go back on your oath.’ Jhendaro incited hatred. The men, now provoked, twisted their moustaches. Hastily, they saddled their horses and took the reins in their hands. They set out for the pasturage of Jhenjhania. The horses sped in the spur of a moment. They arrived at the water tank of Dipawali. Jhendaro said, ‘O brothers, dismount your horses. We don’t want to attack the town. We dare not. Pabu and Chando are messengers of death. We won’t return alive if they strike back. We’ll encamp at the outskirts and invite them here. We’ll meet them at our camp site. If not, even a stray dog of Gadh Gujhania will growl at us. No one will be on our side. We’ll proceed with caution or our folks back home will laugh at us.

Thus spoke Pabu,
 Thus he spoke,
 ‘O Chando, listen to what I say.’
 ‘Our brother-in-law, O Chando,
 Our brother-in-law,
 He has come with an offer of peace.’

(An accompanist: If he really means it, why doesn’t he go to Pabu’s palace? The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

‘One should not have enmity with one’s kin, O Chando.
 One should not have enmity with one’s kin.
 It is better that we bury our feud.’

‘One should not be at war with one’s uncles and cousins, O
 Chando.

One should not be at war with one’s uncles and cousins.
 Let us make peace with them.’

‘We must resolve our differences, O Chando.
 We must resolve our differences.

We must live in harmony with our sister’s husband.’



‘They have come to our doorstep, O Chando.
They have come to our doorstep.
We’ll receive them warmly.’

They sat on the rugs.
They sat on the rugs.
On the green and yellow rugs they sat.

Jhendaro welcomed his brothers-in-law.
He welcomed his brothers-in-law.
‘Listen to what I say,’ he said.

O maharaj! The Khensis encamped at the outskirts. Jhendaro said to his men, ‘Go to my brother-in-law’s palace and tell them that their sister’s husband has come to resolve the feud. Our enmity has existed for too long. It is not wise to take offence against one’s kin. One should not breed enmity with them. Brothers-in-law should live in peace. We have come to resolve our differences. Quickly go and request them to come here.’ Two of Jhendaro’s men raced to Pabu’s palace. They said to Pabu, ‘Your brother-in-law has camped at the outskirts. He has come to resolve the feud. He wants to see you. He’ll welcome you with sumptuous steaks of meat. He’ll serve you with the best brew of liquor. We wish to forget the past and restore peace. We want to live in harmony.’

O maharaj! Pabu and Chando pondered for a while. Pabuji, the crown prince said, ‘O Chando, our relative by marriage has extended a hand of friendship. Jhendaro is our sister’s consort. He killed Bhim, the Charan chief, and widowed Deval at a young age. But he is Tema’s husband. Brothers-in-law should live in harmony. He wishes peace between us. We should embrace him gracefully.’ *O maharaj!* Chando and Pabu, Huro and Buro, Dhebo and Dhepho, the six siblings, trod along the path. Hastily, they tore the way to the outskirts. On the green and yellow rugs the Khensis were seated. The Rathors sat beside them. They were served with opium-drink. The brothers-in-law offered opium-drink to one another. They conversed quietly, ‘We committed a grave error. Scores of our men died because of our



mistake. We used to live in peace and harmony. Chando said, ‘O brother-in-law, you planted the seeds of the feud.’

O maharaj! The best brew of liquor was served to all. Jhendaro had a container with two compartments. One part contained water and the other was filled with liquor. He poured liquor to the Rathors and filled the goblets of the Khensis with water. (*Tambur*) The Rathors emptied goblet after goblet of wine, while the Khensis drank water. The liquor rose to the Rathors’ head. They narrated tales of bravery. The Khensi king kept filling their goblets with wine. Liquor makes men talk. The Rathors were completely drunk. Chando said, ‘O brother-in-law, you are no better than a low-bred swine. You sowed the seeds of hostility. You were destined to die at my hand. You must be grateful to Pabu that your life was spared. We forgave you for the sake of our sister.’

O maharaj! Jhendaro was awaiting such an opportunity. As Chando spoke these words, he stood up. He put his hand on the hilt of his sword. He drew out his sword. (*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Chando babbled under the influence of liquor. O Lord! The Rathors, the pride of the land, were in drunken stupor. Jhendaro brandished his dagger. He beheaded Pabu and Chando. The people of Gadh Gujhanian were in a daze. Buro, the bright morning star, lay lifeless. Darkness engulfed the earth. *O maharaj!* The Rathors were the tigers of the land. People were stunned and dumbstruck. The kith and kin of the Rathors were bewildered. Gadh Gujhanian looked desolate. People wept and wailed in the alleyways. Pabu and Chando were slain. Jhendaro Khensi said, ‘O my brave warriors, there is no time for delay. Move swiftly. We’ll raid the palace of clouds.’

O maharaj! He led his army to the palace. He saddled his horse. (*Tambur*) He tore his way to the palace of clouds. Blinded with fury, he performed a heinous act. He dragged out the queens and ripped open their bellies. He destroyed the unborn lives of their babies. ‘I will wipe out the lineage of the Rathors from the face of this earth,’ he yelled. He descended the palace of clouds and hurried back to Jhayeria with his army. *O maharaj!* May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life



is short but the tale never ends.

Pabu was wedded at Sonagar.
 He was wedded at Sonagar.
 His bride arrived at Gadh Gujhania to meet him.
 She arrived at the outskirts.
 She arrived at the outskirts.
 At the outskirts she halted.
 She saw many women at the outskirts.
 She saw many women there.
 The Rathor women had assembled in great numbers.
 The signs of destruction were evident.
 The signs of destruction were evident.
 Lifeless bodies and heads lay scattered everywhere.
 She took Pabu's head in her lap.
 She took Pabu's head in her lap.
 Inconsolably, she wept and wailed.
 'You snapped the bridal-knot.
 You snapped the bridal-knot.
 You left me at the wedding-pavilion.'
 She shed tears of blood.
 She shed tears of blood.
 She lamented the death of her beloved.
 'Take me along with you, O Pabu.
 Take me along with you.
 You mean fellow, why have you left me behind?'
 'We haven't even enjoyed nuptial bliss, O Pabu.
 We haven't even enjoyed nuptial bliss.
 We haven't tasted worldly pleasures.'
 'You lighted my life, O Pabu.



You illuminated my life.
 O, the lamp that lightened my life is now extinguished.’
 She beat her breasts.
 She beat her breasts.
 ‘My fate has deceived me.’
 ‘Why did you leave me behind, O Pabu?
 Why did you leave me behind?
 To whom have you entrusted me?’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhendaro committed a heinous offense. He was vile and vicious. He slaughtered the people of Gadh Gujhanian. He butchered one and all. *O maharaj!* A wife without her husband is incomplete. The life of a man without his spouse is meaningless. The world prospers when men and women live together. *O maharaj!* No men were left alive in Gadh Gujhanian. Pabu, Chando and the other warriors were killed. The Khensis had destroyed even the unborn lives of their future offsprings. Women assembled at the outskirts of the town. They placed the heads of their husbands in their laps. They mourned their death.

O maharaj! The bride of Sonagar thought of her husband. Pabu had snapped the bridal-knot. She waited for her husband for sometime, ‘If he is busy then I’ll go to his house. I’ll go to Gadh Gujhanian to meet him. O my brave husband! He plundered Jhayeria single-handedly. But he has not send word to me for seven months. I should go to his palace.’ *O maharaj!* She sat off for Gadh Gujhanian. But she encountered inauspicious signs. She saw women carrying black pots. The princess of Sonagar trembled with anxiety and fear. O Lord, ill was done in the world. She walked along with halting steps. She arrived at the outskirts of Gadh Gujhanian. ‘Pabu and Chando are no more. Huro and Buro, Dhebo and Dhepho, all the Rathor princes have been killed. Bellies of pregnant women were ripped open. New lives were destroyed. The Khensis of Jhayeria plundered the town. Jhendaro slaughtered our people ruthlessly,’ the princess of Sonagar



was told. She was taken aback. She went about here and there. She stopped a passer-by. She asked the same question to everyone.

O maharaj! When everybody related the same tragic tale, O how she lamented! She beat her breasts. 'Ill has been done in the world. Pabu and I were circling the sacred fire. We had circled it twice. While circling the fire for the third time, Pabu cut the bridal-knot. I did not even get to see his face well. I just had a glimpse of him. I came here to meet my groom. But Oh God! I came here to meet my doom.' *O maharaj!* A sea of women surrounded her. The princess stopped at the outskirts. The palace of clouds stood empty and deserted. She made her way through the lifeless bodies and severed heads.

O maharaj! Pabu's wife bent to look for her husband's body. She caught sight of his upturned moustache and bushy brows. Like a mountain peak, his body lay on the ground. The princess rushed to him. She nestled his head in her lap. She wailed and lamented, 'O king, your murderers should be banished to hell. O what a disaster! I had not even gazed at you to my heart's content. We were yet to engage in sweet talks. We had not enjoyed conjugal bliss. We did not enjoy worldly pleasure in this birth. When shall we meet again? We are separated forever. In which birth shall we be re-united?' A ceaseless flow of tears coursed from her eyes. The people around stood stunned and speechless. They were drowned in a surging ocean of grief. *O maharaj!* The women around cried in sympathy. Scores of biers were brought in. The bodies of Chando and Pabu were laid in the same bier. (*Tambur*) Pabu's bride said,²⁸ 'O my sisters-in-law, may you eat, drink and prosper ever after. May you enjoy each moment of your lives. I want to be a *sati*. I'll immolate myself with my husband's body. I do not want to live without him. I'll lie by him on his bier. Husband and wife are separated. I'll follow him in death.'

O maharaj! Pabu's bride stepped onto his pyre. (*Tambur*) Deval spoke aloud, 'O my bhabhis, you are fortunate that you can follow your husbands on their last journey. When Bhagania was plundered and my Bhim was killed, I could not join him on the pyre and become



a sati. O my bhabhis, you are fortunate that you can accompany your husbands to heaven. You'll be re-united in your next birth. But one entire life lies between my Bhim and me. His body lay unattended for days. Crows and stray dogs gnawed at my Charan's lifeless body.²⁹ O my bhabhis, the heads of your beloved rest in your laps. But be sure that the seed of the Rathor clan is not confined to fire. The Khensi king ripped open the bellies of the Rathor queens. If by God's grace, any life is throbbing inside, it should not be destroyed before it has seen the first ray of light.'

O maharaj! Pabu's wife pondered for a while, 'I would have committed a sin. When Pabu cut the bridal-knot, a glare flashed and penetrated deep inside me. O sister-in-law, a six-month old life thrives inside my womb.' She descended the pyre. With a single stroke of the dagger, she cut open her belly. She handed the unformed baby to Deval and said, 'O sister-in-law, I hand over this child to you. Rear and nurture him like your own flesh and blood.' She entrusted the child to Deval and immolated herself on her husband's pyre.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* The wives of the Rathors became satis. Pabu and Chando, Huro and Buro, Dhebo and Dhepho, the bodies of all the six Rathor princes were consigned to fire. Gadh Gujhanian looked deserted and desolate. All but one Rathor was killed. Deval carried the child in the loose end of her cloth. She took it to the palace of clouds. *O maharaj!* She went to the palace. 'How fragile this life is!' she thought, 'O God, protect this mass of flesh from evil eyes. It is like a tender flower bud. See that it does not wither. I plead you to avert every evil influence. God, see that it flourishes in the finest way.' *O maharaj!* Deval brought a gold-encrusted cradle. She wrapped the child in layers of cotton swaddling. She rocked the cradle with a shimmering string. The child grew by day and night. He was named Jhalaro, meaning a deep cut made by a knife. *O maharaj!* May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. May you rule over this universe for many many years, *O honkaria*. Time is fleeting but this tale will be remembered for years to come.





JHALARO, THE PRINCE

The half-sprouted seed of the Rathors,
The half-sprouted seed of Rathors,
Was entrusted to his aunt.

His mother ascended the pyre.
His mother ascended the pyre.
She immolated herself in the fire.

The nobility of such acts,
The nobility of such acts,
Chaste wives becoming sati brings good luck to the family.

The newly wed princess,
The newly wed princess,
She ended her life on her husband's pyre.

The prince's cradle was made of gold.
The prince's cradle was made of gold.
With a shimmering string it was rocked.

Deval crooned the prince to sleep.
She crooned the prince to sleep.
The prince was rocked in a golden crib.

Deval reared the child with great care.
She reared the child with great care.
The child grew in a grand palace.

He grew by day and night,



He grew by day and night.
 He was raised with great care and concern.
 In the folds of cotton swaddling,
 In the folds of cotton swaddling,
 The child was kept in cotton folds.
 The heir apparent,
 The heir apparent,
 He was the only descendant of the Rathor clan.
 The only ray of hope,
 The only ray of hope,
 The child was the lone survivor of the two families.
 'None is alive in my family.
 None is alive in my family.
 I didn't have any offspring,' said Deval.
 'O God, avert all evil eyes from my child.
 Avert all evil eyes from my child.
 Protect the scion of the Rathors from evil influences.'
 The prince teetered and tottered around.
 He teetered and tottered around.
 He crawled and tumbled as he learnt to walk.
 The prince started toddling.
 He started toddling.
 Soon he started plodding in the streets.
 The prince started playing in the streets.
 He started playing in the street.
 He played in the alleyways of Gadh Gujhania.

(Tambur)

Deval reared the child with great care. She rocked his cradle with a shimmering string. She crooned him to sleep. Earnestly, she would



pray to God, ‘O God, I have no one to call my own. The enemy killed my husband and his kin. Whom should I call my own? My brothers too are murdered. I am orphaned and alone. All my hopes are pinned on this little angel. Protect him from evil.’

On an auspicious day,
 On an auspicious day,
 The sun shone brightly on an auspicious day.
 The child was reared indulgently.
 The child was reared indulgently.
 His aunt doted on him.
 The prince toddled around.
 He toddled around.
 Soon he started playing.
 The prince played in the streets.
 He played in the streets.
 With his friends he played in the alleyways.
 The prince was sent to school.
 He was sent to school.
 He began going to school.
 The prince was so bright and promising,
 He was so bright and promising,
 He excelled in all fields.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

On a very auspicious day, a narrator narrates the story and the entire court listens to it intently. The incident occurred in *satjug* but is narrated in *kaljug*. This is a tale of virtuous people. The entire court listens intently. Jhalaro, the prince, was brought up indulgently. Deval, his aunt, doted on him. *(Tambur)* Soon the child began to crawl. He toddled and tumbled as he grew. *O maharaj!* The prince was sent to school. He was his aunt’s favourite. Deval pondered for a while. ‘He



is the lone survivor of our family. He is still tender and young. He must not learn about past events.’ She advised the prince, ‘O son, ignore the rumours that you hear. Do not go to your friends’ houses to play. Turn a deaf ear to wagging tongues. After school is over you should come straight home. We’ll talk about times of joy and sorrow. But don’t pay any heed to what others say.’

One fine day the prince saw some boys playing a game of *gedi-dado*. The boys played with a stick and a ball. Jhalaro stopped to watch them play. The children said, ‘O you lonely, forlorn lad, why do you stare at us? We won’t let you touch our sticks and ball.’ Jhalaro felt insulted. He said, ‘I won’t touch your sticks and ball.’ Straightaway, he came home. He said to his aunt, ‘The boys are playing *gedi-dado*. I too long to play the game. I want a stick and a ball.’ *O maharaj!* He was an obstinate child. His aunt gave in to his demand. A child and a king, they will surely have their way. ‘O aunt, you are like my mother. Please bring me a stick of pure gold and a silver ball. Get them quick and fast. I want to play in the alleys.’

Thus spoke Jhalaro,
Thus he spoke,
‘O aunt, listen to what I say.’

‘A stick and a ball, O aunt,
A stick and a ball,
Get me a stick and a ball.’

‘I want to play in the alleys, O aunt.
I want to play in the alleys.
I want to play with friends.’

Deval went to the goldsmith’s shop.
She went to the goldsmith’s shop.
To the goldsmith she went.

She bought a gold stick.
She bought a gold stick.
A silver ball she bought.



Jhalaro tossed and turned in bed.

He tossed and turned in bed.

He could hardly sleep a wink.

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhalaro, the prince, placed the stick under his bed. He tried to get some sleep. He tossed and turned in bed. He played the game of gedi-dado in his dream. The waking cock's crow heralded the day. The first streaks of light brightened the sky. The prince sprang out of bed. He picked an earthen pitcher in his hands. He made for the jungle to answer the call of nature. He cleaned his teeth and rinsed his mouth. He washed his legs and arms. He offered prayers to the rising sun. He respectfully recalled his parents' names. He clad himself in a dhoti and fastened a Rathori turban on his head. He picked the stick and the ball. He came to the marketplace. He showed his stick and ball to everyone. That impressed the Brahmin children. *O maharaj!* They befriended the prince. They ran towards the outskirts to play. They arrived at the kuri field. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

The children went to the outskirts.

They went to the outskirts.

They went to play at the end of the village.

They arrived at the kuri field.

They arrived at the kuri field.

At the kuri field they came to play.

They spoke to the prince,

They spoke to the prince,

'O friend, listen to what we say.'

'We'll play with the stick and the ball.

We'll play with the stick and the ball.

We'll play the game of gedi-dado.'



(An accompanist: O, how they played! The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

Thus spoke the boys,

Thus they spoke,

‘O Jhalaro, listen to what we say.’

‘No one will play from your side, O Jhalaro.

No one will play from your side.

You’ll be alone on one side, we’ll all play in the other team.’

The prince was alone in one team.

He was alone in one team.

All the other boys played against him.

Both the teams hit the ball in turns.

Both the teams hit the ball in turns.

They hit the ball when their turn came.

The larger team was winning.

The larger team was winning.

Jhalaro was the lone loser.

He got annoyed.

He got annoyed.

Enraged, he hit the ball with all his strength.

The boys standing next to him were hit hard.

The boys standing next to him were hit hard.

They were hit on the legs and arms.

Crying, they left the ground.

Crying, they left the ground.

They went back to their homes.

The prince came back alone.

He came back alone.

He returned with his stick and ball.



(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

Jhalaro showed his golden stick and silver ball to the boys playing in the street. They followed him to the kuri field. They said to him, 'We'll play with you on one condition. In one team you'll play alone and the rest of us will play against you.' *O maharaj!* One's real brothers would stand by you. No one will stand by a stranger. The boys called the prince lonely and forlorn. The prince would play alone. None of the boys joined his team. Jhalaro played against twenty boys. He began losing the game. He got annoyed. He hit the ball with all his might. The ball hit the boys standing nearby. They all shrieked and cried. Shouting, they left the ground. *O maharaj!* They loathed the prince for hitting them, 'O you cursed wretch, may you be ruined. You broke our arms and legs. No doubt you are cursed from birth!' They all left the field and went home. Jhalaro was left alone. He collected his stick and ball. At night, he pondered for a while, 'These boys will not play with me again. What shall I do?' He tossed and turned in bed. At dawn he went to the marketplace. He called another group of boys.

O maharaj! One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be very auspicious. The prince went to the kuri fields with his friends. *Khama!* (*Tambur*) They went to play the game of gedi-dado. The boys said, 'No one will play from your side. We'll all play against you.' Jhalaro pondered for a while, 'O God, these boys always make me play alone. But today I'll show them my worth.' *O maharaj!* In a fit of anger, he hit the ball with all his might. The ball split in several pieces. The ball struck them on their arms and legs. Crying, they all left. *O maharaj!* An old woman was collecting cow dung nearby. One of the pieces hit her. Her basket fell from her head. The dung pats scattered all over. The old widow loathed the prince. She screamed, 'O, you are cursed since birth. You caused your family's ruin.'

'May you be ruined, O wretch,' said the old hog.

'May you be ruined!

Why did you strike me?'



‘My dung pats are scattered and spoilt, O wretch.
My dung pats are scattered and spoilt.
May you be ruined.’

‘Who are your kith and kin, O wretch?
Who are your kith and kin?
You are an orphan waif.’

‘Who killed your father, O wretch?
Who killed your father?
You do not even know your family history.’

‘The Khensis killed your father, O wretch.
The Khensis killed your father.
Your father was slaughtereded by the Khensi king.’

‘For the sake of dowry, O wretch,
For the sake of dowry,
He was killed for the sake of gifts promised to his wife.’

Jhalaro listened intently.
He listened intently.
He pondered over each and every word.

Tears flowed from his eyes.
Tears flowed from his eyes.
He cried ceaselessly.

The old woman loathed him.
The old woman loathed him.
She cursed him for hitting her basket.

(Tambur)

The old woman loathed and cursed Jhalaro, ‘O wicked fellow, may you be banished to hell. Your uncle from Jhayeria wiped out the Rathor clan. He did not spare even the unborn babies. Your aunt Tema caused the destruction. And you, the lone survivor of the clan, were cut from your mother’s womb before your time. And look at



you, how arrogantly you behave! If you think that you are very brave, why don't you go to Jhayeria to take revenge? Then alone will I call you a real prince.' *O maharaj!* Jhalaro wept and wailed. Tears trickled down his cheeks like the pouring rain in the months of Shravan and Bhadarvo. He wept and whined, wailed and whimpered. Ill was done in the world. Jhalaro sobbed his heart out. Hastily, he trod along the path. He arrived at the palace of clouds. He climbed the steps. May you be well, *O honkaria!* Life is short but the tale never ends.

The prince cried his eyes out.

He cried his eyes out.

Tears ran down his cheeks.

The prince climbed the palace of clouds.

He climbed the palace of clouds.

He wept and wailed aloud.

Tears flowed ceaselessly from his eyes.

Tears flowed ceaselessly from his eyes.

He cried inconsolably.

Thus spoke Deval,

Thus she spoke,

'O son, listen to what I say.'

'Who beat you so hard, O son?

Who beat you so hard?

Who pointed a finger at you?'

Thus spoke Jhalaro,

Thus he spoke,

'O aunt, please listen to what I say.'

'I want to see my mother, O aunt.

I want to see my mother.

I wish to go to her.'



‘Show me my father, O aunt.

Show me my father.

Send for my parents.’

‘Tell me, where are my siblings and parents, O aunt?

Tell me, where are they?

I long to be with them.’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

With tears in his eyes the prince ran back to his palace. He wept aloud in the palace of clouds. He beat his forehead and hit his head hard against the wall. *O maharaj!* Deval came running in. She asked, ‘Who has beaten you? Who has thrashed you? Why do you look so disturbed? Who has slighted you? O son, if someone has even glared at you, I’ll haul out his eyes. If someone has as much as pointed a finger at you, I’ll strike it off. Tell me, what distresses you.’ *O maharaj!* The prince cried inconsolably. His aunt tried to soothe him. ‘O my son, please calm down and narrate to me the tale of your woe.’ The prince replied, ‘No one has beaten me, O aunt. But today, I thought of my mother. Where is my father? I yearn to see and talk to him.’ *(Tambur) O maharaj!* Thus Jhalaro, the prince, spoke and Deval listened to him intently. ‘O aunt, why don’t you take me to my uncles and cousins? I long to see my family. None of my relatives is around. Where have they all gone? Tell me the truth, O aunt.’ Bygone days of misery were recalled. The forgotten tale of grief descended on Deval’s heart. Tears welled in her eyes. She beat her breasts.

Deval lamented aloud.

She lamented aloud.

She wailed and wept.

Deval remembered her siblings.

She remembered her siblings.

She thought of her brothers.



Ill was done in the world.

Ill was done in the world.

Her brothers had been slaughtered without a reason.

Chando was the best among the riders.

He was the best rider.

Her heart ached as she remembered him.

The Rathor princes,

The Rathor princes,

Their memory haunted her.

‘What should I do, O brothers?

What should I do?

O, you were my only family.’

(An accompanist: *Khama!* The lead singer: O, calm down.)

Deval wailed and wept.

She wailed and wept.

She shed tears for her brothers.

‘Better not talk of your parents, O son.

Better not talk of them.

Don’t cry for them.’

(An accompanist: How is it that only we are left behind? The lead singer: You said it right.)

‘Why didn’t we die too, O aunt?’ asked the prince.

‘Why didn’t we die too?

Why are just the two of us left behind?’

‘Tell me the truth, O aunt.

Tell me the truth.

Don’t hide back anything from me.’

Thus spoke Deval,

Thus she spoke,

‘O son, listen to what I say.’



(Tambur) *O maharaj!*

The aunt and her nephew huddled together. They cried their heart out. Deval said, ‘O son, it is better that we do not talk about your parents. Forget about your uncles and cousins.’ But the prince did not listen to her. He became very stubborn and unobliging. *O maharaj!* Deval thought of her brothers. They were the best riders. Their moustaches, bright black eyes and bushy brows flashed in her mind. They were the jewels of the crown. The earth trembled under their feet and the sky reverberated with their deep voice. This is a tale of their bravery and courage. The Rathors were great warriors. They suffered like the five Pandav brothers. They were killed by treachery. Deval cried incessantly as she recollected their memory. She said aloud, ‘O son, who has misguided you? Who has jeered at you? You are my only hope. I see through your eyes. Which wicked harlot has told you about things past?’

O maharaj! Deval wept for Pabu and Chando. She remembered her brothers. She tried to control herself. She ran her fingers through Jhalaro’s hair. She took him onto her lap, ‘O son, please forget your parents. Harden your heart. Have patience. The brave and noble warriors are gone. You are still too young to know about them. Tears won’t achieve anything for you. Don’t waste them for what you can’t attain. Make patience your virtue. Haste will spoil everything.’ *O maharaj!* Thus the aunt and her nephew talked to each other.

‘O my son, listen to what I say.

Listen to what I say.

I’ll tell you about my innermost feelings.’

‘Make patience your virtue, O son.

Make patience your virtue.

Haste will make you repent.’

‘Who has slighted you, O son?

Who has slighted you?

May such wenches be banished to hell.’



‘Such harlots must be condemned, O son,
They must be condemned.

Who has scoffed at you?’

‘We were struck by a drought, O son.

We were struck by a drought.

Your parents died during a famine.’

‘Tell me the truth, O aunt,’ said the prince.

‘Tell me the truth.

Don’t hold back anything from me.’

Bhalai! Jeevta!

‘Why can’t you be patient, O son?

Why can’t you be patient?

Don’t lose your restraint.’

‘Listen carefully, O son.

Listen carefully.

I’ll tell you the tale of the past.’

‘I’ve brought you up with great difficulty, O son.

I’ve brought you up with great difficulty.

Do not ruin my efforts with hasty action.’

Thus spoke Deval,

Thus she spoke,

‘O son, please listen to what I say.’

‘Tema caused their death, O son.

She caused their death.

She was thirsty for their blood.’

‘Tema devised their downfall, O son.

She devised their downfall.

Such wenches should be condemned.’

‘Listen to me intently, O Jhalaro.

Listen to me intently.



Don't lose your calm.'

'How can I be patient, O aunt?

How can I be patient?

It is difficult to hold myself back.'

'Why did Tema get them murdered, O aunt?

Why did she get them murdered?

She has erred in the world.'

'O Jhalaro, go to Gadh Gujhanian.

Go to Gadh Gujhanian.

Visit your parents' palace.'

³⁰ 'Go and see for yourself, O son.

Go and see for yourself.

O son, go once to Gadh Gujhanian.'

'See our palaces of clouds, O son.

See our palaces of clouds.

Visit Gadh Gujhanian once.'

'Visit your father's court, O son.

Visit your father's court.

Go to the court of your noble parent.'

Jhalaro cried his eyes out.

He cried his eyes out.

Aunt and nephew shed tears of blood.

Jhalaro cried for his family.

He cried for his family.

He shed tears unreservedly.

'Listen to me, O aunt.

Listen to me.

I will tell you about my innermost feelings.'

'Tell me about my uncles and cousins, O aunt.

Tell me about my uncles and cousins.



I wish to know about my family.’

‘What should I say, O son?

What should I say?

May Tema be condemned to hell.’

‘Tema sowed the seeds of destruction, O son.

She sowed the seeds of destruction.

She brought her brothers’ downfall.’

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Deval said to her nephew, ‘O son, what has been done cannot be reversed. We should put the past behind us. You are still young. Once you grow into a strapping youth, we’ll think of avenging our family. *O maharaj!* A willful and obstinate king and a child, both will have their own way. Jhalaro wept and wailed. He asked the same question over and again, ‘O aunt, tell me more about my family. How did they die?’ Deval tried to pacify him, ‘Your aunt, Tema, incited hatred for the sake of her promised dowry. She was promised wedding gifts when she was still in her cradle. She betrayed her brothers for those gifts. She asked her husband to obtain the promised gifts for her. She asked him to claim them from her brothers. Jhendaro Khensi felt provoked. He plundered Bhagania, my husband’s land. My Bhim was killed in the skirmish. Then after a few months, he attacked your father’s land. He didn’t spare a soul there. Pabu and Chando, Huro and Buro, Dhebo and Dhepho, all my six brothers were killed by treachery. O my son, all the Rathors were butchered mercilessly. I’ll tell you every happening but spare your tears. Harden your heart.’

O maharaj! Jhalaro replied, ‘O aunt, don’t hold back anything. I want to know everything about them all.’ Deval said, ‘O son, what should I say? Jhendaro ripped open the bellies of the Rathor queens. He wanted to wipe out the Rathor clan. O son, he is a vicious man. You must be patient. With great difficulty I’ve reared you. You are



the hope for my old days. If you too were to be killed, what would happen to me? The Rathor clan would be wiped from the face of the earth. Do not act in haste.’ The Rathor prince shed bitter tears. He wept and wailed and banged his head against the wall. Then he paused for a while to listen to the tale. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Thus spoke Deval,

Thus she spoke,

‘O son, listen to what I say.’

‘Wait a little while more, O prince.

Wait a little while more.

Wait until I unlock the doors.’

‘Wait until I show you the drops of congealed blood, O prince.

Wait until I show you the drops of congealed blood.

Wait until you see the blood of your kin.’

Jhalaro knelt down.

He knelt down.

He bowed down to the stone edict.

He bowed down.

He bowed down.

He paid his respect over and again.

Jhalaro took the keys in his hands.

He took the keys in his hands.

He unlatched the door.

The bolted doors of the fort,

The bolted doors of the fort,

After many years the gates were opened.

Jhalaro entered the fort of Gadh Gujhanian.

Jhalaro entered the fort of Gadh Gujhanian.

He went through the alleys.



The aunt and her nephew,
 The aunt and her nephew,
 They moved around in Gadh Gujhanian.

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Deval and Jhalaro spoke about the past. They wailed and wept for their dead family. Deval recalled her brothers and husband and cried for them. *O maharaj!* Who can replace one's brothers? The memory of Pabu and Chando brought tears to her eyes. Their tales, buried in the womb of the past, were unearthed. Deval and Jhalaro could not hold themselves. Tears flowed incessantly. Deval said, 'O son, restrain yourself. Harden your heart. Make patience a virtue.' The prince said, 'Let us go to Gadh Gujhanian. I want to see the palace. We can deal with other things later.' His aunt took the keys in her hand. Hastily, they tore the way. They arrived at the marketplace of Gadh Gujhanian. They came to the square. Deval said, 'O son, stop here for a while. Do you see that stone edict? That is the guardian deity of the market square. Pay your respect to the deity and then unlock the door.'

O maharaj! Jhalaro knelt down. Over and again, he bowed to the edict. He unbolted the doors of the fort. *O maharaj!* They walked around in the fort. They arrived at the assembly room. Deval said, 'Look my son! This is your father's court. The fragrance of the musk essence is still fresh. The air is fragrant with its essence. Green and gray rugs continue to adorn the floor.' The prince gazed hungrily at everything. He breathed deeply the air. He took in the fragrance of his father's court. He said, 'O aunt, you said that they are long dead. But it appears as if they have just left. The air is still fresh with fragrant essence. The rugs are readily spread.' Jhalaro took in every detail. He felt overwhelmed. He moved from corner to corner and banged his head on the wall. Tears flowed from his eyes like the pouring rain in Shravan and Bhadarvo months. He cried for his relatives. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale



never ends.

Thus spoke the prince,
 Thus he spoke,
 ‘O aunt, listen to what I say.’
 ‘These green and yellow rugs. O aunt.
 These green and yellow rugs.
 For whom are they spread?’
 ‘Who used to sit on these rugs, O aunt?
 Who used to sit on these rugs?
 Where are those brave men?’

The tale of the past,
 The tale of the past,
 The tale of bygone days made them cry.
 ‘They left me alone in this world.
 They left me alone in this world.
 Who will care for me so indulgently?’
 The thrones encrusted with gold and silver,
 The thrones encrusted with gold and silver,
 Jhalaro saw the thrones gilded in silver and gold.

Jhalaro observed them closely.
 He observed them closely.
 He looked at them from all sides.
 ‘Those who used to grace these thrones,
 Those who used to grace these thrones,
 Where are those brave men?’ asked Jhalaro.

Jhalaro bit his fingers in despair.
 He bit his fingers in despair.
 He cried out in anguish.

Jeevta!



Thus spoke Deval,
 Thus she spoke,
 ‘O son, listen to what I say.’

‘Set your eyes on every mark of your family, O son.
 Set your eyes on every sign of your family.
 Take in the minutest detail.’

The swinging boards,
 The swinging boards,
 His father’s swings he saw.

The bolstered seat of his parent,
 The bolstered seat of his parent,
 He saw the bolstered seat.

The vessels for heating bathing water,
 The vessels for heating bathing water,
 He saw the gold-encrusted vessels.

Tears trickled down his eyes.
 Tears trickled down his eyes.
 ‘A blissful life they must have lived!’

‘Those who used to swing on these boards,
 Those who used to swing on these boards,
 Where have they all gone?’ he mused.

‘O my father, he must have sat on this seat.
 He must have sat on this seat.
 Where has he gone?’

Jhalaro shed tears for his father.
 He shed tears for his father.
 He cried inconsolably.

‘O father, why did you leave me behind?
 Why did you leave me behind?
 I stand alone and desolate.’



The arms and armaments,
 The arms and armaments,
 He saw his father's weapons.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!*

Jhalaro, the prince, shed bitter tears, 'O aunt, those who used to sit on these rugs, where have they all gone?' He banged his head against the wall and bit his fingers in despair. His aunt tried to dissuade him. 'O aunt, whom should I call my parents? Who will look after me indulgently?' he cried. *O maharaj!* He saw the gold-gilded thrones and silver encrusted hookah. 'O where are the men who pulled on these hookahs and sat on these thrones?' His father's bolstered seat caught his sight. 'O, who used to recline on this seat, why did he leave me behind? I feel alone and desolate.' *O maharaj!* Jhalaro was still a child. He cried his heart out. Ill was done in the world. Grief made him detached and disinterested. O God, no one should suffer such agony. No one should experience such pain. *O maharaj!* Noble people were killed treacherously. Jhalaro shed tears for his uncles and cousins. Deval said, 'O son, look at each and every belonging of your father. Mark them in your memory.' The prince caught sight of swinging boards and vessels for heating bathing water. Every time Jhalaro saw an item, he cried for his family.

In the labyrinth of the palace,
 In the labyrinth of the palace,
 Jhelaro thought of his parents over and again.

'Who killed them, O aunt?
 Who killed them?
 Who killed my uncles and cousins?'

The shields and the swords,
 The shields and the swords,
 He beheld the shields and the swords.

Jhalaro stepped into the courtyard.



He stepped into the courtyard.

He ascended the palace of clouds.

In the palace of clouds,

In the palace of clouds,

He couldn't restrain his tears once in the palace of clouds.

His father's dwelling,

His father's dwelling,

He cried in his father's palace.

A pearl necklace,

A pearl necklace,

He saw his father's belongings.

Thus spoke the prince,

Thus he spoke,

'O aunt, listen to what I say.'

'Whose palace is this, O aunt?

Whose palace is this?

Who lived in this palace?'

'This is my brother's palace, O prince.

This is my bother's palace.

Chando lived in this palace.'

'They were the pride of the land, O prince.

They were the pride of the land.

They were the jewels of the crown.'

(An accompanist: *Khama!* The lead singer: Yes, what you say is true.)

The prince bit his fingers in despair.

He bit his fingers in despair.

He shed bitter tears.

'What shall I do, O aunt?

What shall I do?



Ill has been done in the world.'

'Both the brothers were laid on the same bier, O prince.

Both the brothers were laid on the same bier.

Their bodies were laid on the same pyre.'

The prince ran his fingers over his moustache.

He ran his fingers over his moustache.

The determined prince touched his moustache.

'Be patient my son.

Be patient my son.

Don't act in haste.'

The prince looked around him.

He looked around him.

He gazed at his kin's belongings.

'How do I keep my cool, O aunt?

How do I keep my cool?

My kin died an untimely death.'

'My father and uncle, O aunt,

My father and uncle,

They were laid on the same pyre.'

'Eat, drink and prosper ever after, O aunt.

Eat, drink and prosper ever after.

I bid farewell to this world.'

'Listen to what I say, O aunt.

Listen to what I say.

I'll tell you of my innermost feelings.'

'I'm not destined for worldly pleasures, O aunt.

I'm not destined for worldly pleasures.

I wish to renounce this world.'

'Listen to what I say, O prince.

Listen to what I say.



My words come from my heart.'

'I implore you to listen to me, O prince.

I implore you to listen to me.

Do not say such things.'

Jhalaro became an ascetic.

He became an ascetic.

He lost interest in worldly pleasures.

A group of ascetics,

A group of ascetics,

A group of ascetics arrived in town.

They encamped in town.

They encamped in town.

The ascetics roamed the streets.

'Listen to what I say, O aunt.

Listen to what I say.

I implore you to listen to me.'

'I'm going to be an ascetic, O aunt.

I'm going to be an ascetic.

Worldly affairs do not interest me.'

Jhalaro clad in an ochre robe.

He clad in an ochre robe.

He was destined to wear ochre clothes.

O maharaj!

Deval said to the prince, 'O son, this is your father's assembly room. The counselors and storekeepers, the tradesmen, goldsmiths and coppersmiths, everyone used to assemble here. How proudly and upright they would sit! They would narrate tales of brave exploits. They savoured sumptuous steaks. The best of liquor was served generously. The counselors used to discuss courtly matters. Gadh Gujhanian was in its splendor then.' *O maharaj!* The prince listened



intently. ‘O aunt, who used to sit on these gold encrusted thrones?’ ‘They belonged to Pabu and Chando, my son,’ said she, ‘they were the pride of our land. Pabu, the crown prince and Chando, a man with short strides, used to sit on them. Your father used to occupy that seat and all his subjects used to sit on the rugs.’

O maharaj! Jhalaro wept for his father. He shed bitter tears. Deval said, ‘O son, please don’t lose heart. Make patience your virtue.’ ‘O aunt,’ said the prince, ‘how do I keep my calm? How can I restrain myself? All my kin are dead.’ ‘Come son,’ said Deval, ‘let us go elsewhere.’ They moved from corner to corner. They saw the shields and swords. They saw the guns of Bundikot. Jhalaro ran his fingers over them. He said, ‘O, where are those men who used to wield these weapons?’ *O maharaj!* They reached the stable. They saw Kesar Kalmi, the mare, and the well-bred colt of Chando. O how the prince lamented! ‘The riders of these horses are no more. I would have rode with them. I would have trotted alongside them. To whom can I address as my uncle and cousin? Whom shall I address as my father?’ He wept over and again. Deval said, ‘Come son, I’ll take you to another palace.’ They went to Chando’s palace. Jhalaro asked, ‘Who used to dwell here?’ ‘Chando, your father’s younger brother lived here. What a valiant pair of brothers were they! The Rathors were six brothers in all, but Chando and Pabu were never separated. They were the pride of the land. Bushy brows, upturned moustaches and bright, black eyes! Bulging muscles and sturdy chests seemed to stretch through their outfits. Their bravery was matchless. They prospered and flourished in this palace. May Jhendaro be banished to hell! That wicked man killed them treacherously.’

O maharaj! The prince could no longer control himself. He ran his fingers over his moustache. ‘O aunt, what should I do? How do I avenge their deaths?’ ‘Restrain yourself, my son, check your emotions. I won’t spare Jhendaro. He paved the way to our doom. The bodies of two brave warriors were laid on the same pyre. Two flourishing towns were razed and destroyed. People were killed ruthlessly. What to do, O son? He slaughtered scores of people. And what to say of Tema? May she die ahead of her time! She conspired



against her brothers. She betrayed her own siblings. She forgot whose daughter and whose sister she was! But my son, don't take any hasty action. Your uncle is a vicious man. You are still young. Once you grow into a strapping youth, you may think of taking revenge.' O *maharaj*! The prince was disturbed and agitated, 'O aunt, how do I endure this pain? I feel like ending my life. I want to join my father in his heavenly abode. Why did you save my life? Don't stop me, I want to follow him.'

O *maharaj*! Jhalaro brought an ochre coloured cloth. He got it stitched. He got ochre coloured robes sewed for himself. A group of ascetics had encamped at Gadh Gujhania. The prince paid them a visit. He spoke to them, 'O hermits, from where do you come and where do you plan to proceed? Will you accept me into your fold?' The head ascetic said, 'You are very winsome. You seem to hail from a noble family. You seem to be an offspring of a Rajput. Upturned moustache, bushy brows and shapely nose! The corners of your bright eyes are pointed like the tips of a spear. And look at the two rows of well set teeth! Your face blooms like a fresh rose. A strong and sturdy chest matted with hair, these are signs of your noble lineage. Why do you want to be initiated into our fold?' O *maharaj*! Jhalaro said, 'Worldly pleasures interest me no more. Please take me into your fold. Hold my hands and draw me out from this dismal state. I won't do you wrong. I'll serve you well.' O *maharaj*! The ascetic and Jhalaro talked for some time. The prince was initiated into the ascetic's fold. May you be well, O *honkaria*! Life is short but the tale never ends.

On an auspicious day,
On an auspicious day,
The sun spread its benevolent rays on earth.

The ascetics reached Jhayeria.
They reached Jhayeria.
They encamped near a step-well.

They encamped on the town's fringes.



They encamped on the town's fringes.

They settled at the outskirts.

The hermits were clad in ochre coloured clothes.

They were clad in ochre coloured clothes.

A young hermit was wearing fine clothes.

Jhalaro pitched his tent.

He pitched his tent.

He put up his tent by the roadside.

Jhalaro rested in his tent.

He rested in his tent.

He reclined near the step-well.

The maids came to fetch water.

They came to fetch water.

The queen's maids arrived there.

With the pitchers on their heads,

With the pitchers on their heads,

They came to fetch water in their pots and pitchers.

The maids arrived at the step-well.

They arrived at the step-well.

At the step-well they paused.

The prince travelled with the ascetics.

He travelled with the ascetics.

He went with the hermits.

The women saw the young hermit.

They saw the young hermit.

They found him very endearing.

The women gathered around to see him.

They gathered around to see him.

They stopped to see the young hermit.

'Look at his bushy brows,' said they.



‘Look at his bushy brows.
He seems brighter than the rising sun.’

‘O young hermit, you are so good looking.
You are so good looking.
Tell us how you look so handsome?’

(An accompanist: They are bewitched!)

Jhalaro had an aquiline nose.
He had an aquiline nose.
His gaze was penetrating.
His eyes were bright and black.
His eyes were bright and black.
And rows of well set teeth he had.

His upturned moustache,
His upturned moustache,
It touched the corners of his eyes.

The bulging muscles,
The bulging muscles,
When flexed they seemed to burst from his tunic.

The maids were fascinated.
They were fascinated.
They stood bewitched.

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

A group of ascetics travelled through the country side. They reached the outskirts of Jhayeria. They encamped by the step-well. *(Tambur)* They pitched their tents by the step-well. They pitched them with golden and silver pegs. The cluster of tents shone under the sun. A young ascetic pitched his tent near the step-well. He sat inside his tent and gazed around.



O maharaj! One fine day an incident occurred which turned out to be auspicious. The queen's maids came to fetch water. They hitched high their decorated pots and pitchers. Chatting and gossiping, they came to the step-well. They caught sight of the encampment. The ascetics were wandering about. The maids peeped inside a tent near the step-well. A young ascetic was sitting there. 'O what a good looking hermit!' the maids exclaimed. A few ventured closer. They could not take off their eyes from the young ascetic. They followed him wherever he went. 'O friends, how can one be so handsome?' Their gaze rested on him alone. 'A man more handsome cannot exist. Fortunate will be the woman who shall win his heart. For whom is he meant? We hope he finds the right woman or his youth will be wasted.' *O maharaj!* Thus the maids talked among themselves. 'What a lovely face! Is he a man or a pretty damsel?'

O maharaj! When you feel attracted towards a good-looking person, you must chant God's name. You must pray God for granting the person as your mate. You must not falter and succumb to carnal desires. You should praise a beautiful person with suitable words. *O maharaj!* The maids admired the young ascetic. He had arrested their attention. They lingered around his tent. They did not want to leave. The sun coursed up high in the sky. The maids were worried but their hearts would not obey. Their feet refused to follow any commands.

The maids went homeward.

They went homeward.

They set off for the cloud-capped palace.

They had hung around for long.

They had hung around for long.

They had lingered around the young ascetic.

They arrived at the palace of clouds.

They arrived at the palace of clouds.

They put down their pots and pitchers.



Tema lashed them with a whip.

She lashed them with a whip.

She beat them with a whip made of monkey's tail.

'Don't be so harsh, O queen,' said they.

'Don't be so harsh.

Listen to what we say.'

'We have some astonishing news for you, O queen.

We have some astonishing news for you.

By the step-well some hermits have camped.'

'Because of a young ascetic, O queen,

Because of a young ascetic,

We were delayed because of him.'

'He is so handsome, O queen.

He is so handsome.

He is brighter than the rising sun.'

'From where has he come, O maids?' asked the queen.

'From where has he come?'

'We know not from where this charming man has come,'
replied they.

'Where is he heading, O maids?' asked the queen.

'Where is he heading?'

'We know not his destination,' replied the maids.

Tema got dressed to see the hermit.

She got dressed to see the hermit.

She dressed in a befitting way.

Tema embellished herself in various ways.

She embellished herself in various ways.

She got dressed to go to the well.

Tema hitched high the pitchers brought from Kashi.

She hitched high the pitchers brought from Kashi.



She took the silver pots in her hand.

Tema set off to fetch water.

She set off to fetch water.

She started for the step-well.

Jeevta! Bhalai!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

The maids lingered near the hermit till late. They could not tear their eyes off him. Hastily, they filled their pots with water. Hurriedly, they went back. They walked with halting steps. Over and again they turned to look back at the ascetic. The sun had coursed up the sky. The maids raced back to the palace. *O maharaj!* They came to the palace of clouds. They put down their pitchers and pots. The queen awaited them with a whip in her hand. Like lightning she struck, ‘O wenches, where were you loitering for so long? May you be cursed and condemned! You had gone to fetch water from the step-well. What delayed you?’

O maharaj! ‘O queen, please listen to what we say,’ said the maids, ‘Spare us today. You won’t believe our tale!’ ‘What’s so intriguing that you want to tell? Tell me what happened at the well,’ said the queen. ‘The whole town has gathered,’ replied the maids, ‘a charming ascetic has come to town. A group of ascetics have encamped at the outskirts. A winsome young ascetic moves in their company. He wears a silk robe and expensive footwear. He is so handsome and good-looking! Our eyes were glued to him. We were delayed because of him. You may not believe us, O queen! He has such a shapely nose. The corners of his bright eyes are pointed like the tips of a spear. His face blooms as a fresh rose. With a chest so sturdy, he looks so manly. The end of his moustache touches the corners of his eyes. His eyes burn brightly as a tiger’s. One dare not stare back at him. He is so striking! How can one help lingering around him?’

O maharaj! The queen pondered for a while. ‘If what you say is true, O maids, I must see this ascetic.’ She set off for the outskirts. What



did she behold? The entire town was drawn to the young hermit. Everyone was hovering around the handsome prince. She said to her maids, 'O girls, see what should I do to win him. I'll empty all the pots and pitchers and come to the step-well to fetch water. I'll hang around the place all day long.' Who can decipher a woman's mind? Tema donned a suitable skirt and tied her hair with a kerchief. She chose a blouse that went well with her and picked her best necklace. She applied streaks of black-kohl to her eyes and dotted her forehead with a red mark. A nose ring adorned her nose. She was daintily dressed and in high spirits. Pearls sparkled in her locks. She was clad in a sari that suited her beautifully. Her beautiful anklets jingled as she walked. She was in full pomp and splendour. In her gorgeous attire, she walked gracefully, her anklets making a jingling sound. She took the path to the step-well. Her flowing strides seemed to reach out as if she was walking across the earth. Her skin, a deep golden hue, shone like a fresh flower in bloom. The biting eastern wind swept across her delicate face. She emptied the pitchers. She hitched high the pots and the pitchers on her waist and hurriedly tore the way to the outskirts of the town. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Tema set out to see the hermit.

She set out to see the hermit.

She was eager to see the ascetic.

The maids walked along with her.

The maids walked along with her.

With the trailing maids she reached the outskirts.

They made for the step-well.

They made for the step-well.

They arrived at the outskirts.

They put down their pots and pitchers.

They put down their pots and pitchers.

They placed their pitchers on the ground.



They looked around for the ascetic.
 They looked around for the ascetic.
 They found the young hermit sitting gracefully.
 'He is so charming,' thought the queen.
 'He is so charming.'
 She was struck by his looks.

He looked like Pabu.
 He looked like Pabu.
 The young prince bore resemblance to Tema's brother.
 Tears welled in her eyes.
 Tears welled in her eyes.
 Her cheeks became moist.

'He can't be an ordinary mendicant,' thought she.
 'He can't be an ordinary mendicant.'
 He bears the sign of the Rathor clan.'
 'O, how closely he resembles Pabu!
 How closely he resembles Pabu.
 He looks like my brother.'

The memories of the Rathors haunted her.
 The memories of the Rathors haunted her.
 She thought of her deceased brothers.

Tema beat her breasts.
 She beat her breasts.
 She tore her hair in despair.

Jeevta!

Tema wailed and wept.
 She wailed and wept.
 Tears coursed down her cheeks.
 She had betrayed her brothers.
 She had betrayed her brothers.



She had caused their death.

Tema grieved for her brothers.

She grieved for her brothers.

How could she forget them!

(An accompanist: O, how she grieved! The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)

Ill was done in the world.

Ill was done in the world.

The prince made her reminisce.

Jeevta!

O maharaj!

Tema emptied all the pitchers and pots. She set off to fetch water. Look, how a woman can intrigue! She took empty pots in her hands. She made an excuse to go to the step-well. She placed her pots and pitchers on the ground. *O maharaj!* The ascetic looked charming in his silk robe. He walked with a graceful gait. He was in deep slumber when the queen came. The chattering of the maids made his eyes flutter. He lazily stretched his limbs. (*Tambur*) Tema wept and whined, wailed and whimpered. ‘I’ve made a grave mistake,’ she said. ‘I betrayed my brothers to win my spouse’s confidence. Now there is no one whom I can call my siblings. Many years have passed. I have not come across any Rathor warrior. But how would one come across a Rathor man? Jhendaro wiped out the entire clan. He even ripped open the bellies of expecting Rathor women. He terminated the unborn lives.’

O maharaj! Tema wept and wailed. She shed bitter tears. Her eyes followed the young ascetic. Jhalaro stared back at her. He pondered for a while, ‘She must be my father’s sister, the destroyer of my clan. O how hard she tries to catch my attention! I’ll break her bones if she inches a step closer.’ The prince spoke to the people around and confirmed his doubts. ‘She is Tema, my aunt. But what shall I gain by killing her? Why should I waste my strength on her? Having



even a glimpse of the face of a wicked person as her in the morning would bring ill luck for the rest of the day. Such harlots should be left to rot in hell. She wreathed havoc on her brothers to win her husband's heart. She spun incredible tales to win his favour. She is a feuding wench.'

Tema wept and wailed.
She wept and wailed.
She shed tears for her brothers.

Tema beat her breasts.
She beat her breasts.
She cried in despair.

She followed the ascetic.
She followed the ascetic.
Wherever he went she went behind.

Her eyes were glued to him.
Her eyes were glued to him.
She could not tear her gaze from the ascetic.

Jhalaro felt annoyed with her.
He felt annoyed with her.
With blood shot eyes, he looked at her.

Thus spoke Tema,
Thus she spoke,
'O son, listen to what I say.'

'Do not be cross with me.
Do not be cross with me.
Let us talk peacefully.'

'I yearn to take you in my embrace, O son.
I yearn to take you in my embrace.
Do not take any offence.'



'Keep away from me,' said the prince.

'Keep away from me.

You are a blood thirsty, feud-raking wench.'

'You brought doom upon my land.

You brought doom upon my land.

Gadh Gujhanian was destroyed because of you.'

Thus spoke Tema,

Thus she spoke,

'O prince, listen to what I say.'

'I've come to your aid, O prince.

I've come to your aid.

I'll help you to reach your enemy's palace.'

Look, how Tema is changing sides!

O how she is changing sides!

Against her consort she'll now connive.

First she conspired against her brothers.

She conspired against her brothers.

Now, she is plotting against her husband.

May such wenches be condemned, O brothers.

May such wenches be condemned.

She should rot in hell.

'I'll lead you to your father's enemy, O prince.

I'll lead you to your father's enemy.

Jhendaro has hunted the tigers of Gadh Gujhanian.'

'The Rathors were the pride of my land.

They were the pride of my land.

Chando and Pabu were killed by him.'

(An accompanist: Ill was done in the land. The lead singer: Yes, you said it well.)



Tema took Jhalaro in her fold.

She took him in her fold.

She fondly embraced him.

Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Tema brought doom upon her brothers and now she sets to conspire against her consort. She said to the prince, ‘O son, you remind me of my brothers. I’ve longed to talk to someone from my parents’ place, but there is no one in whom I can confide. I’ll hold you close to my heart.’ *O maharaj!* The prince was irked and enraged. He averted his eyes. Tema wanted to win his favour. She pleaded, ‘O son, forget what happened in the past. What will you gain by avoiding me? I’ll help you to achieve your goal.’ The prince pondered for a while. ‘She is a blood thirsty wench. She destroyed my clan. She deserves a place in hell. If she does not leave me alone, I’ll whip her to death.’

O maharaj! The prince did not pay any heed to Tema. He said, ‘Don’t ever try to cross my way or I’ll slit your throat and quench my thirst with your blood. I’ll hack you to death.’ Tema replied, ‘If you won’t listen, yet another Rathor life will be wasted. You won’t be able to achieve your ends without my help. All your efforts will go in vain. Why don’t you understand?’ Jhalaro pondered for a while. ‘She is spineless. What should one do with such women? A woman is a daughter or a sister when everything is fair, once she takes offence she’ll turn against her siblings. How can one trust such a person?’ Tema said again, ‘Come with me. Join me. I’ll lead you to your enemy. I’ll help you to quench your thirst for blood. Don’t hold any grudges against me.’ Jhalaro, the prince, ran into his aunt’s arms. O how they were locked in an embrace! *O maharaj!* Tema pressed him to her bosom. Jhalaro hugged and cuddled her. They wailed and wept. Jhalaro said, ‘O aunt, why did you bring doom upon my family? You did ill in the world. Not a single Rathor man was left alive. What did you gain by such an act? What was the crime of my



people?’ The aunt replied, ‘O son, refrain from saying such things. Banish those awful memories. Don’t bring to your lips the names of those who have perished. Think of the people who are still alive. Let me take you to the palace of clouds. I’ll lead you straight into your enemy’s dwelling. Pounce on him if you wish and avenge all the wrongs done to your family.’ *O maharaj!* Jhalaro followed his aunt. He came to the palace of clouds. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Thus spoke Tema,
Thus she spoke,
To her brother’s son she spoke.

‘O son, listen to what I say.
Listen to what I say.
I implore you to listen.’

‘I’ll take you to my abode, O son.
I’ll take you to my abode.
I’ll lead you to the palace of clouds.’

The prince pondered for a while.
He pondered for a while.
He mused over his aunt’s advice.

‘She had brought about a catastrophe.
She had brought about a catastrophe.
The Rathor clan was wiped out.’

(An accompanist: Gadh Gujhanian was ravaged because of her.
The lead singer: Yes, it was so.)

‘How sweetly she talks today.
How sweetly she talks today.
Should I forget the past and trust her?’

‘Can’t you put your past behind, O prince?’ asked she.
‘Can’t you put your past behind?
Shake off by gone memories and come with me.’



Tema tried to persuade the prince.
 She tried to persuade the prince.
 She wanted to rise in the prince's esteem.
 The prince led the way.
 He led the way.
 His aunt followed him.

Hastily they tore up the path.
 Hastily they tore up the path.
 They headed for the palace of clouds.

The prince ascended the stairs with hasty steps.
 He ascended the stairs with hasty steps.
 He went to the palace.

Thus spoke Tema,
 Thus she spoke,
 'O maids, listen to what I say.'

Bhalai! Jeevta!

O maharaj!

People thronged the streets and the alleys of Jhayeria. 'O Lord, who is this young ascetic? Whose descendant is he? We cannot meet his eyes, they are so bright. He is so magnetic!' they exclaimed. Everyone wanted to be around the young hermit. The shopkeepers gazed at him from the doorways of their shops. The women going to fetch water stopped at his sight. The workers paused to look at him. People felt charmed by him. The prince tore his way. Hurriedly, he went along with his aunt. They reached the palace of clouds. The queen summoned her maids, 'O maids, make haste. Quickly lay a cot and spread a silk mattress over it. Fetch musk perfume and the chaplets of flowers. My brother's son has come. O maids, fan him gently. Heat some water in a copper vessel.' Tema's joy knew no bounds. 'This is an auspicious moment for me. My house should look spic and span. How misguided was I! I conspired against my own



brothers. My brothers, Chando and Pabu, were the pride of their land. Pabu's son has graced my palace today. The splendour of this place is enhanced by his gracious presence.' The memory of her brothers brought tears to her eyes. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Tema wailed and wept.

She wailed and wept.

She shed tears for her brothers.

No one can play the role of one's brothers.

No one can play the role of one's brothers.

Who can replace one's siblings?

She missed her siblings.

She missed her siblings.

She remembered them over and again.

Tema thought of the fateful day,

She thought of the fateful day,

On which Pabu and Chando were slain.

Her heart rebelled.

Her heart rebelled.

For her brothers she grieved.

Tema went to the market.

She went to the market.

She set out for the marketplace.

Tema went to a potter's place.

She went to a potter's place.

To the potter's house she went.

Tema spoke to the potter.

She spoke to the potter.

'O brother, listen to what I say.'



'I've come on an unusual errand, O brother.

I've come on an unusual errand.

I want a container with two compartments.'

The potter handed her the container of her choice.

He handed her the container of her choice.

He gave her a container with two compartments.

Tema bought the container.

She bought the container.

She left the potter's place.

Jeevta! Jeevta!

Tema went to the liquor vendor.

She went to the liquor vendor.

To the liquor shop she went.

'Why did you trouble yourself, O queen?

Why did you trouble yourself?

Usually you send your attendants or maids.'

(An accompanist: Why did she go herself? The lead singer:
You know it well.)

'For an unusual errand I've come, O brother.

For an unusual errand, I've come.

I've taken trouble for a special reason.'

'Give me the best brew of liquor, O brother.

Give me the best brew of liquor.

I want the best liquor.'

The vendor gave her the best brew.

He gave her the best brew.

The best liquor she bought.

Jeevta! Bhalai! Jeevta!

The potter said, 'O queen, usually your maids come at your bidding.



Why have you taken the trouble today? The occasion seems to be exceptional.' *O maharaj!* The queen replied, 'I've come on an unusual errand, O brother. I need a container with two compartments. Only a skilled person can meet my requirement. That's why I've come personally.' The potter showed her a container with two compartments. The queen contentedly examined it. She bought the container and headed to the liquor shop. The liquor vendor saw her from a distance. He ran forward to meet her. 'O queen, why have you taken the trouble today? You could have sent your attendants. What's so special that you've come?' 'O brother,' said the queen, 'I want the best brew of liquor.' The liquor vendor complied with her need. Hastily, she left the place. (*Tambur*) She went to the marketplace. She bought some noxious potion which was so strong that even a few drops of it could make one numb. Tema bought the toxic potion. She filled one part of the container with the potion and the other with liquor. She returned home hastily. O see, how a woman can intrigue!

O maharaj! She fondly loved her brothers when she was of a tender age. But as she grew into a woman, she behaved selfishly. For the sake of a few presents, she betrayed her brothers. And now she is scheming against her spouse. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Look how she intrigues, O brother!

How she intrigues!

She is so treacherous.

Tema returned to her palace.

She returned to her palace.

To the palace of clouds she came.

Tema spoke to her maids,

She spoke to her maids,

'O maids, listen to what I say.'

'Ground the spices into fine powder, O maids.



Ground the spices into fine powder.
There is no time for delay.'

Tema set off for the court.
She set off for the court.
She went to the king's assembly.

The court was in progress.
It was in progress.
Jhendaro's court was in session.

Courtly matters were being discussed.
Courtly matters were being discussed.
The courtiers were busy discussing courtly matters.

(An accompanist: What is the matter today? The lead singer:
You know it well.)

Thus spoke Jhendaro,
Thus he spoke,
'O courtiers, listen to what I say.'
'The queen is coming this way, O chieftains.
She is coming this way.
What can be so urgent?'

Jhendaro stood up from his seat.
He stood up from his seat.
He went forth to receive his queen.

(An accompanist: O queen, what's the matter? The lead singer:
Khama!)

'What is the matter, O queen?
What is the matter?
For what important affair have you come?'
'I want to talk to you, O king.
I want to talk to you.
I wish to tell you something.'



'A crucial situation has arisen, O king.
A crucial situation has arisen.
I would like to discuss the matter with you.'

Thus spoke Jhendaro,
Thus he spoke,
'O chieftains, listen to what I say.'

'My queen wants to discuss something important.
She wants to discuss something important.
She has come to my court to call me.'

Jhendaro adjourned the court.
He adjourned the court.
He spoke to his uncles and cousins.

'We shall continue our discussion tomorrow.
We shall continue our discussion tomorrow.
We'll meet again to discuss courtly matters.'

The court was winded for a day.
The court was winded for a day.
The courtiers returned to their places.

Tema headed for the palace.
She headed for the palace.
She came back with the king.

Tema was planning to devise his death.
She was planning to devise his death.
She conspired against him.

Thus spoke Tema,
Thus she spoke,
'O king, listen to what I say.'

'I want to tell you something, O king.
I want to tell you about something.
Something incredible has happened.'



'You and my brothers, O king,
You and my brothers,
The blessed pair of brothers-in-law was separated long back.'

(An accompanist: She is speaking of her brothers. The lead singer: Yes, you got it right.)

Jhendaro thought of his brothers-in-law.
He thought of his brothers-in-law.
He was reminiscing.

'They were so endearing!' thought he.
'They were so endearing!
They were charming and handsome.'

Jhendaro regretted their death.
He regretted their death.
'O God, I was misguided,' thought he.

Jhendaro was filled with remorse.
He was filled with remorse.
He regretted his malevolent feelings.

Thus spoke the queen,
Thus she spoke,
'O king, listen to what I say.'

'We erred and lapsed in the past, O king.
We erred and lapsed in the past.
But now we have realized our mistake.'

'You should correct the wrong, O king.
You should correct the wrong.
I want you to reconcile with my brother's son.'

'Don't be remorseful, O king.
Don't be remorseful.
You now have a chance to right the wrong.'

'My brother Pabu's son, O king,



My brother Pabu's son,
He has come to our palace.'

'Call him here at once, O queen.
Call him here at once.
I want to meet Pabu's son.'

The king was filled with remorse.
He was filled with remorse.
He shed tears for his dead relatives.

'He is our guest, O king.
He is our guest.
The prince has come to our palace.'

(An accompanist: Where is he, O Queen? I wish to see him.
The lead singer: Is it so?)

'I am impatient to see him, O queen.
I am impatient to see him.
I can't wait to meet him.'

'I'll bring him here, O king.
I'll bring him here.
Wait for a while and he'll be here.'

Hastily, she went to the prince.
Hastily, she went to the prince.
'O prince, listen to what I say.'

'Keep your calm, O prince.
Keep your calm.
Appear poised and composed.'

(An accompanist: Look cool and composed. The lead singer:
Yes, you said it right.)

'Don't be impulsive, O prince.
Don't be impulsive.
Don't take any impetuous measures.'



'I'll take you to meet your uncle, O prince.

I'll take you to meet your uncle.

You should reconcile with him.'

Bhalai! Jeevta!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Tema, the queen, called the king to her palace. Jhalaro sat there in hiding. The maids were engaged in his service. They fanned him gently with their hand fans. The prince twisted and twirled the ends of his moustache. He pondered for a while, 'My uncle must be an awful person. He wiped out the entire Rathor clan. He ripped open the bellies of pregnant women. He destroyed the seeds of the next Rathor generation. I am impatient to see him.'

O maharaj! The prince was engrossed in his thoughts. The maids were busy serving him. Meanwhile, the queen arrived with the king. She took Jhendaro to another room. 'Why did you come to call me?' asked the curious king. 'O king, the lord of my house, I have a secret to share. Listen to me carefully. You must have been irked when I called you from court. You were sitting among your uncles and cousins. You must be cross with me as I made you leave the company of your kin. But have you ever thought of me? I have lost all my siblings. There is none that I can call my own. For years I have been suffering this agony. People like to be with their kith and kin. Women like to visit their parents' homes. I have been deprived of that bliss for long. Where should I go? Whom should I address as my brother? O king, such depressing thoughts flood my mind. Therefore, I called you to be with me.'

(Tambur) O maharaj! The queen sounded miserable. The king pondered for a while. 'O queen, I was misguided. I pity your plight. None of us was aware about the consequences of our feud. Don't look so depressed. I'll see that no more grief comes your way. Don't shed tears for your brothers.' 'O king, all my brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law enjoy familial bliss. But we live a life of solitude. No one visits our palace. I endure this solitary life for your sake. None



from my family is left to stand by you. You can't wed another wife at this age. I have caused only miseries to you,' said Tema. See, how a woman intrigues! Her brother's family perished on her account and now she conspires against her husband. Tema said, 'O king, had my brothers been alive, they would have come here to share rounds of opium-drinks. You would have enjoyed their company. But alas! They are no more.'

The king's heart mellowed with the memories of his dead relatives. 'They were so charming,' thought the king, 'Chando was indeed handsome and Pabu was the pride of the land. He was tall and towering as a mountain peak. They were handsome and amiable. But they are no more.' The king shed tears for his relatives. He wept and wailed. The queen said slyly, 'O king, think of what you did. You ripped open the bellies of pregnant women. You aborted the Rathor seeds. You erased the Rathor clan from the face of the earth. But why should we talk about long ago tales? What good would your tears do? But I'll give you some heartening news. A Rathor seedling survived that fateful day. Promise me that you won't harm him.' Jhendaro said, 'O queen, I hope what you say is true. If my brother-in-law's child is alive, I'll take him to my heart. I'll make him sit beside me. But this is not likely.' 'My lord, a Rathor prince did survive. Pabu's son is alive. But I fear your wrath. I fear as I talk to you.' 'Where is Pabu's son? How I long to see him! How I want to take him in my embrace! After a long time I'll be fortunate to see a relative,' exclaimed the king. The queen replied, 'Don't get impatient. I'll call him right now. I'll have to persuade him.' 'O queen,' said the king, 'if he refuses to come, I'll carry him all the way to my palace on my back. I wish to reconcile with him. Age has made us wise. We have reached the sunset of our lives. We should embrace our relative before it is too late.' The queen said, 'O king, wait for a while. I'll see if the boy is willing to come.'

O maharaj! Tema left the room with hasty steps. She went to another quarter of the palace. She said to the prince, 'O son, bury the memories of by-gone days. Be calm and collected. I'll take you to meet your uncle. Wear an amicable look. Speak to him politely. Your



looks should not betray your heart. Share opium-drinks with him. With the passage of time, he has become wise, but if he says something annoying, please remain cool and calm. Or all my efforts will go in vain. You'll get slain. Do exactly as I say if you want to take revenge.' Jhalaro said, 'O aunt, I can't help trusting you. I'll follow your words. If I break my oath, I won't be called Pabu's son anymore.' Tema elicited promises from both. The king and the prince were bound by their words. She brought them together. The king went forth to receive his brother-in-law's son. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Jhendaro went forth to receive Jhalaro.

He went forth to receive Jhalaro.

He was impatient to see him.

The prince was sitting on a high couch.

He was sitting on a high couch.

The maids were fanning him.

Tema led the king to him.

She led the king to him.

The king wanted to see him.

Like a waxing moon,

Like a waxing moon,

His face shone like a waxing moon.

His very looks bore the Rathor lineage.

His very looks bore the Rathor lineage.

He was a Rathor prince.

Jhendaro slumped in grief.

He slumped in grief.

He beat his breasts in despair.

Jhendaro wept and wailed.

He wept and wailed.

He shed bitter tears.



(An accompanist: Now he regrets his folly. The lead singer: *Khama!*)

After a long, long time,
After a long, long time,
A familiar face had come to sight after very many years.

The king sat and talked fondly with Jhalaro.
He sat and talked fondly with Jhalaro.
But he could not meet the prince's eyes.

Jhendaro was seated on a high couch.
He was seated on a high couch.
He sat beside his nephew.

Tema said to her maids,
She said to her maids,
'O maids, listen to what I say.'

'O king, follow me. I'll take you to the prince. He has agreed to see you. I've engaged a few maids to serve him. With much difficulty I've persuaded him. Let us go and see him. But remember, he is still very young. He is quick to take offence. Don't get annoyed if he says some unpleasant words. He is yet to see the world. Don't take his words to heart. Don't be angry with him.' Thus the queen bound the two men by their words. *Khama!*

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Hastily, the king went to see the prince. Jhalaro was sitting on a high couch. As the king entered the room, a bright moonlike face came to his sight. 'He is so charming! There can't be a more handsome man on this earth. His eyes shine like the rays of the rising sun. They burn brightly as those of a tiger's. The tapering ends of his moustache touch the corners of his eyes,' Jhendaro pondered for a while. 'O God, though he is so young, he looks formidable. He seems to be an excellent warrior.' He rushed forward to meet him. But the prince did not pay him any heed. Jhendaro, the king, touched him tenderly. 'O my nephew, stop thinking about the bitter tidings of the past. The past is irrevocable. After a lapse of



many years a familiar face has come to my sight.’ The king wept for his dead relatives. He regretted his past deeds. He placed his hand on the prince’s knee.

O maharaj! The king spoke courteously to the prince. But the prince was hostile. He did not utter a single word. He did not even look at his uncle. The king was keen on pleasing him. He said, ‘O maids, bring a goat, healthy and stout. We’ll treat the prince with steaks of goat meat. I want to make amends with him. Make haste, move swiftly. I want to see my kin’s son happy.’ *O maharaj!* The maids brought a goat, fresh and healthy. On seeing the goat, the prince flourished his sword and slew it. He slew the goat in a single stroke.

Jhendaro wanted to reconcile.

He wanted to reconcile.

The uncle tried to resolve the quarrel.

They buried the old feud.

They buried the old feud.

They shared steaks of goat meat.

Tema brought the best brew of liquor.

She brought the best brew of liquor.

She served the nephew and uncle.

Tema kept filling their goblets.

She kept filling their goblets.

The goblets were filled with liquor.

Jhalaro spoke to his uncle.

He spoke to his uncle.

‘O uncle, listen to what I say.’

‘I feel miserable, O uncle.

I feel miserable.

I yearn for familial love.’

‘I am forlorn and alone, O uncle.

I am forlorn and alone.



Who will look after me?’

The nephew and his uncle,
The nephew and his uncle,
They talked about their tidings.

(An accompanist: After many years they have met. The lead singer: You said it well.)

Thus spoke Jhalaro,
Thus he spoke,
‘O uncle, listen to what I say.’

(An accompanist: O uncle listen to me. The lead singer: I want to say something.)

‘You have deserted my land, O uncle.
You have deserted my land.
Not even a stray dog inhabits the streets of Gadh Gujhania.’

‘No one has survived in my family, O uncle.
No one has survived in my family.
With whom can I talk intimately?’

The prince poured out his heart.
He poured out his heart.
His uncle and aunt listened intently.

(An accompanist: O, they are reminiscing. The lead singer: *Khama.*)

‘Listen to the tale of my misery, O uncle.
Listen to the tale of my misery.
To whom should I turn for solace?’

Thus spoke Jhendaro,
Thus he spoke,
‘O son, listen to what I say.’

(An accompanist: What is done cannot be undone. The lead singer: What you say is right.)



‘What is done can’t be undone, O prince.
 What is done can’t be undone.
 But let us sit together and talk peacefully.’

Jeevta! Bhalai!

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Jhalaro was anguished. He wanted to avenge his father’s death. He gave vent to his pent up emotions by killing the goat. He slashed the animal in a single stroke. The maids prepared sumptuous steaks from the goat’s liver. Tema entertained Jhendaro and Jhelaro with liquor. She handed a goblet to each. They sipped liquor from one another’s goblet. Tema sat between the two men. She kept filling their goblets. *O maharaj!* How a woman schemes! Tema had a container with two compartments. One part contained wine and the other was filled with a toxic potion. After a while, she started filling the king’s goblet with the potion. Jhalaro was served liquor. The men were inebriated. The queen observed them closely. Jhalaro said to the king, ‘None has survived in my family. To whom should I turn for solace? I have come to your palace. I don’t want to talk about the past. What do we gain by talking of bygone days? O uncle, I have heard that you had ripped open the bellies of pregnant women. I have heard many such tales. But I don’t believe the heresy. They seem to be tell-tales. Why were you at war with my father? You fought with him for many years. For what did you fight?’ Jhalaro, the prince, spoke and the king listened intently.

(Tambur) The king replied, ‘O son of my brother-in- law, I’ll tell you my innermost feelings. We were fools to have fought each other. We lost our kith and kin in the battle. I do not even remember clearly what happened. But I am happy that you have survived. We’ll celebrate your visit. We’ll drink to your health and sing songs to rejoice. Eat the sumptuous goat steaks to your heart’s content. My life is waning. I am fortunate that I could see your face. O my child, don’t be remorseful. I’ll take you under my wing. From today, I’ll be your mother, father, uncle and every relation. I’ll take you to my



assembly. I'll have you sit on the golden throne. We'll mark this day of our union.' Jhalaro said, 'O uncle, today you repent your past deeds. I'll sit on the gold-encrusted seat in your assembly. We too had gold-gilded chairs. We had golden, silver and copper seats in Gadh Gujhanian. Colourful rugs adorned the floor of the Rathor court. The assembly room looked magnificent. But the Rathor court remains empty and unoccupied. Not a single soul is left to live. O uncle, I'm really curious. I am eager to know about the cause of your enmity. People talk of a thousand different things, but I don't believe the heresy. Only you can tell me the truth. Why did you pick up a quarrel with my parent?' O *maharaj*! The king replied, 'O son, listen to me intently.' *Khama*!

(*Tambur*) Sumptuous meat and wine had an effect on the king. Liquor makes people speak. The king said, 'O child, first we fought over a dead boar. Your parent killed my father for the sake of a wild beast. My father, Kalu, the Khensi king, was slain on account of a boar. But I buried the old feud to marry your aunt. We lived in harmony for some time.' 'But, O uncle,' the prince asked. 'You said your father was murdered, but why was he killed? Whose boar had he hunted?' The king replied, 'O son, we were in distress. Drought had struck Jhayeria. But nature had blessed Gadh Gujhanian with abundance. We migrated to your land. The Rathors offered shelter to us. We moved there with our cattle. The wild boar used to frequent the millet field. The boar was your uncle's favourite. My father killed it and a quarrel ensued between them. The Rathors were annoyed. They killed my father with a spear. But I didn't avenge his death. I reconciled by marrying your aunt. But once again we fought over a dead boar.' *Khama*!

(*Tambur*) O *maharaj*! Jhalaro was wise for his years. Shrewdly, he had unearthed the truth. 'O uncle, this is intriguing. What happened then?' 'Then, O son, one day I went to the Dipawali Tank. I set a trap there and sat in hiding. Your father's favourite boar came there at midnight. As the boar came near, I shot him dead. Your people got annoyed. In order to pacify them, I offered them some portion of the boar's meat. I suggested that we divide the carcass in three



portions. I would take two and they could have the remaining portion. Your father felt offended. Your uncle wanted to hack me to death. I fled to save my life. Then your aunt told me about the promised gifts. She was promised the Dipawali Tank and the pasturage of Jhenjhania in dowry. She had also been promised a wild boar, golden pitchers, gold-encrusted footwear and lots more. But your parent had held back those gifts. I was upset. I plundered your land. But scores of my warriors got killed. O son, I was absorbed with ill-will. I wanted to exact revenge. I was misguided. But now I can assure you that nobody will even point a finger at you. I, as your uncle, will protect you.' Jhendaro narrated the tale of the past and the prince listened intently.

(*Tambur*) Thus they talked about their tidings. The queen served them drinks. Once she was sure that her husband was under the sway of liquor, she filled his goblet with the toxic potion. How she conspired against her spouse! Jhalaro was served liquor. The uncle and nephew conversed about the past. May you be well, *O honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends.

Thus spoke the prince,
Thus he spoke,
'O uncle, listen to what I say.'

'Who had killed the wild boar, O uncle?'
Who had killed the wild boar?
Who slew the boar?'

(An accompanist: Who started the quarrel? The lead singer:
Khama.)

'Who started the quarrel, O uncle?'
Who started the quarrel?
The feud ensued from the killing of a boar.'
'That was my father's pet animal, O uncle.
That was my father's pet animal.
You deliberately killed that boar.'



(An accompanist: You were reconciled. The lead singer: You said it right)

‘You were reconciled, O uncle.

You were reconciled.

Then why did you start a fight?’

‘You had buried the old feud, O uncle.

You had buried the old feud.

Why did you annoy my parent?’

Jhalaro spoke to his uncle.

He spoke to his uncle.

‘O uncle, I implore you to listen.’

‘At the Dipawali Tank, O uncle,

At the Dipawali Tank,

Why did you kill a particular boar?’

(An accompanist: He killed it for the sake of dowry. The lead singer: What you say is right.)

‘Of which dowry do you talk, O uncle?

Of which dowry do you talk?

Who had promised the gifts?’

‘Who had promised you the pasturage, O uncle?

Who had promised you the pasturage?

Who had said that Jhayeria would be yours?’

‘Why did you abort the unborn babies, O uncle?

Why did you abort the unborn babies?

Why did you commit such a heinous act?’

(Tambur) O maharaj!

Thus spoke Jhalaro, the prince, ‘O uncle, you did the right thing in killing the boar. The beast used to frequent the millet field. Who owned the field?’ ‘Pabu and Chando owned the field,’ replied the king. ‘O uncle, you were in distress. You had come from a drought-



struck land. Your father was desperate. My parents helped him to survive. You lived in our land for a long time. Then you returned to Jhayeria. Why do you have to kill a boar belonging to Gadh Gujhania? Your father had done that a long time back. And you had buried the feud. Then why did you irk my folks?' The prince, pretending to be in a stupor, continued, 'Perhaps you wanted to revenge your father's death, but you said you wanted to forget the old revenge. You had patched up by marrying my aunt. Then what brewed up between you and my uncle? Tell me the tale of those by-gone days. How I long to hear it!' Thus the prince dragged his uncle into conversation.

The king said, 'O nephew, one day I had an urge to go to the Dipawali Tank. I laid a trap there. There came many animals. Deer, boars and many others. I waited for one particular beast. I had always agonized over my father's death. I thought of killing the Rathor's favourite boar. He was very healthy and strong. I wanted to avenge my father's death. Although I had married your aunt, I wanted to settle the score. When the boar came to my sight, my blood boiled and I fired my gun. The beast was shot. As I was trying to drag the boar away, Chando arrived. He brandished a spear at me. I offered him a share but he would not listen. He spoke abusive words. We quarreled over the beast. But your father intervened. I came back home and feasted on the sumptuous meat. When your aunt came to know about the feud, she claimed that the boar belonged to her. So how could her brothers be cross with me for the sake of a boar? She argued that the boar had been promised to her when she was in her crib. I was upset. I asked your aunt what else she had been given as dowry. She mentioned the many things promised to her as wedding gifts. But these were never given to her. Your parent had held them back. I was irked and annoyed. I avowed to wipe out the Rathor clan.' 'O uncle, you killed my father and uncles treachorously. You killed the wild boar to avenge your father's death. But why did you have to kill the Rathor princes? I'm burning with vengeance. I've come to take revenge. You terminated the Rathor seeds. I am thirsty for your blood.' The prince sprang to his feet. He twisted the ends of his



moustache.

(*Tambur*) *O maharaj!* Jhalaro said, 'You low-bred swine, you killed my folks for the sake of a few trifling gifts. Now pay with your life.' The prince brandished a dagger. He aimed a blow at his uncle. But Jhendaro dodged the blow and dashed out of the room. Jhalaro followed him swiftly.

Jhalaro brandished a dagger.

He brandished a dagger.

'O uncle, you will pay for your sin.'

(An accompanist: O uncle... The lead singer: *Khama!*)

'The mighty one will win, O uncle.

The mighty one will win.

I'll make you pay for your sin.'

(An accompanist: That day you destroyed the seeds of the Rathor generation. Today you'll pay with your life. The lead singer: What you say is right!)

Jhalaro struck a blow.

He struck a blow.

Jhendaro ran for his life.

(An accompanist: Jhendaro had to run to save his life. The lead singer: What you say is right.)

Jhendaro tried to hide in the palace.

He tried to hide in the palace.

He scurried through the labyrinth of the palace.

Jhalaro chased him through the passage.

He chased him through the passage.

'O uncle, your days are numbered.'

In the labyrinth of the palace,

In the labyrinth of the palace,

The king tried to give the prince a slip.



O maharaj! The king fled from the prince. The prince followed him closely. The serpentine passages of the palace were deceptive. The lighted corners looked dark from a distance, and the darker nooks shone in the reflection of the light. The floor gave an illusion of water and the watery surface looked like solid ground. In the mazes of the palace, Jhendaro tried to give the prince a slip. But his enemy was hot in pursuit. *O maharaj!* Even the termites cannot devour the revenge of the Bhils. Revenge never gets old or rusted. The prince was thirsty for Jhendaro's blood.

O maharaj! Jhendaro faltered on his feet. The potion had taken its effect. He tried to conceal himself in the darkest nook and corner. But Jhalaro followed him unfailingly. He jostled him from behind. The king fell flat on the floor. The prince mounted on his chest. He slit his uncle's throat and put his mouth to the gushing flow of blood. The head of the king rolled away. Thirstily, the prince sucked the blood of his enemy. The death of his ancestor was now avenged. Jhalaro smeared his moustache with his enemy's blood. He twirled its end upward. He was the worthy son of his father. He was the offspring of the Rathor clan. The Rathors were the pride of the land. Their people worshipped them as deities. *O maharaj!* May the mother of such sons be hearty. Glory be to the mother who bore such worthy sons. Pabu and Chando were the sons of an apsara. Tema and Deval were their sisters. But the Khensis erred in the world. Ill was done in the land. Deval was widowed at a young age. Her husband was murdered in cold blood. She went to Pabu seeking help. Pabu was encircling the wedding-fire. He flourished his dagger to cut the bridal knot. The flash caused on swishing the sword penetrated the bride's womb. A prince was born. He was named Jhalaro as he was conceived by the flash of light. The prince avenged the death of his ancestors. He drank the blood of his father's murderer. One should pray for such a worthy son. The timid ones should perish. Those who prosper on their father's wealth should be condemned.

O maharaj! Jhalaro, the prince, anointed his moustache with the blood of the Khensi king. He then turned to his aunt, 'O aunt, how do I console you?' 'My son, has the fire of revenge extinguished



within you? I feel content that my brother's death has been avenged.' How spineless was she! How she changed sides! She was the harbinger of doom. Such women should rot in hell. O brothers, never trust a woman, follow your own conscience. The tale comes to an end. May you be well, O *honkaria*. Life is short but the tale never ends. May you live for a million years. Life is long but the tale ends here.

O look, how time flies by but the tale will continue to be sung and performed forever.³¹



REFERENCES

- 1 Indicates refrain of a song. They appear at the end of each subsequent line, forming a similar pattern.
- 2 Same as above.
- 3 Literary meaning ‘bravo’, such expressions are used to encourage the singer or narrator.
- 4 The lead singer or narrator uses such expressions to encourage the accompanist and/or audience. A rapport is created between the narrator and his audience through such words of encouragement.
- 5 The way and tone of singing changes from this stanza onwards, and by and large the recitation of the entire narrative follows this pattern. Since such variations of vocalization cannot be carried into the print medium, to compensate the inadequacy of switch of medium, it has been exemplified in the Dungri Bhili Text. The translation is faithful to the source.
- 6 The narrator at times, hints at a future event to create anticipation in the story.
- 7 The entire narrative is interspersed with singing and prosaic narration. The prosaic version helps the lead singer to break the monotony as well as gives him scope to further elucidate the events and incidents. The prose-verse is sung in a lilting style, to the accompaniment of the tambur, a stringed instrument.



- 8 Here, the word suggests the sound of plucking of the tambur, at regular intervals by the accompanist.
- 9 *Maharaj* means a king or an honourable person; here it is used as an address meaning 'sir'.
- 10 *Rathor Varta* and other oral epics of the Dungri Bhils are not just sung, they are part of a religious rite and are performed. The accompanists and the audience actively participate in the recitation and performance. The tempo of music incites active participation from the audience and it keeps the spirit of the lead singer high.
- 11 It is a way of wishing the addressee to be hale and hearty, and free from the evil eye.
- 12 One of the accompanists, who responds to the lead singer at some intervals.
- 13 This is an expression that appears at some intervals.
- 14 The use of measuring unit of metric system here is striking as the figure does not tally with the distance mentioned in the preceding stanzas.
- 15 In Indian tradition, *ji* is suffixed to a person's name to denote respect.
- 16 Here, the level of vocalization changes. The lead singer, in order to emphasize the tremendous enthusiasm of the queen, and to create comic relief, recites the next few stanzas differently.
- 17 Mentioning the response of the audience underlines the level of involvement on their part.
- 18 The next couple of stanzas are sung in a different tone.
- 19 The next couple of stanzas are sung in a different tone.
- 20 Since any specific lexical meaning of this sentence/phrase could not be ascertained, it has been retained in its original form.
- 21 The next couple of lines are recited at a faster pace and in a different tone.



- 22 Here, the level of vocalization changes. The lead singer, in order to emphasize the sorrow of Alkhu, sings in a prolonged tone, and reciting is aided by gestures and facial expressions.
- 23 Here, the level of vocalization changes. The lead singer, in order to emphasize the annoyance on the part of Chando, recites in a louder tone.
- 24 The next couple of lines are recited at a quicker pace, in a different tone.
- 25 Here, the level of vocalization changes. The lead singer, in order to emphasize the annoyance on the part of Deval, recites in a louder tone and at a quicker pace.
- 26 Here, the level of vocalization changes again. The lead singer, in order to emphasize the annoyance on the part of Deval, recites in a louder tone and at a quicker pace.
- 27 Since any specific lexical meaning of this sentence/phrase could not be ascertained, it has been retained in its original form.
- 28 Here, the lead singer plucks on his tambur several times, and repeats the same line while trying to recollect the thread of the tale.
- 29 The next couple of lines are recited differently.
- 30 The next three stanzas are sung without any accompaniment of musical instruments. The lead singer sings them in a prolonged and lilting tone to express Deval's sorrow.
- 31 This concluding line is recited by someone from the audience, indicating the deep involvement of the listeners.



GLOSSARY

Aak: calotropis gigantean. A kind of shrub. Its flowers are usually not offered to any deity.

Apsara: a celestial damsel, a mythical entity

Arati: the ceremony of moving before an idol or person, in circular motion, a lighted lamp as worship or welcome

Ashadh: the ninth month of Vikram Era, corresponding the month of July

Banti: a kind of coarse grain

Bhabhi: a sister-in-law, wife of one's brother

Bhadarvo: the eleventh month of Vikram Era, corresponding the month of September

Bhajan: a hymn or a prayer pleading or prasing God

Bhakti: worship, devotion

Bilva Patra: leaf of a bell tree, considered sacred, the leaves are generally trifoliate and used for worshipping Lord Shiva

Champa: a kind of a fragrant flower

Charan: name of a Hindu clan, a member of that clan, a bard

Datan: peeled sleek stick of a particular tree, used for cleaning teeth



Dhula no pat: a ritual performed on a Saturday night in the month of Bhadarva, to express one's indebtedness to the Gods

Devar: brother-in-law, brother of one's husband

Gadh: fort

Gedi-dado: a game

Halri: a kind of grass

Hindola: a broad swinging board or cot, hung inside one's house, usually in a family room or inner quarters

Indhoni: a ring of cloth or other soft material placed on the head to carry load

Jeth: eighth month of the Vikram era, corresponding the month of June

Jharkhu: an inauspicious way of guising oneself to show one's annoyance. Such guise is usually worn by some people during the festival of Holi to amuse people and collect donation.

Jhasi: a fragrant flower

Jhavli: a fragrant flower

Kaljug: the fourth among the four ages in the land of Bharata. It is known as the age of vice.

Kaniyor: a kind of tree

Kankavati: a small box used to store kumkum or red turmeric powder

Kanku: red powder, usually made of red turmeric or vermillion, applied on the forehead on an auspicious occasion

Karmadi: a kind of plant, also known as corinda; *carissa corundas*

Ketki: a fragrant flower



Kevra: a fragrant flower

Kir: a person of a community by that name

Kodra: a kind of cheap coarse corn

Kohl: a eye cosmetic used to darken the rims of eyelids

Kumkum: same as *kanku*

Kuri: a coarse grain

Kuria: a coarse grain

Lapsi: a kind of sweet dish made of wheat flour and jaggery

Mahadevji: Lord Shankar

Maharaj: here it is used as an address, meaning 'sir'

Malan: wife of a gardener

Mali: a gardener

Mamera: a ceremony to confer gifts upon a girl by her parents on her wedding or at the time of the seventh month of her first pregnancy

Marva: a kind of fragrant flower

Mogra: jasmine

Nagarvel: a creeper

Odhani: a length of cloth used by women to cover the upper part of their body

Phatana: an obscene or abusive song sung to jeer at the relatives of a bride or a bridegroom at the time of a wedding or such occasion

Rotla: a kind of thick roti, usually made of millet or corn flour

Sasu: one's mother-in-law



Satyug: satya jug/yug (also known as krita yug), the Golden Age is the first among the four ages (consisting of 1,728,000 years), also known as an age of purity. Knowledge, meditation, and penance hold special importance in this era. During Satyug, all people engage only in good, sublime deeds. However, during this period evil comes to this world and the very fabric of time begins to decay.

Shehnai: a musical instrument similar to a fife, usually played on auspicious occasions

Shravan: the tenth month of Vikram Era, corresponding the month of August

Tambur: a musical stringed instrument

Toran: wreath of flowers, leaves etc. used for decorating the main entrance of one's home on festive occasions. Here, it refers to a wedding rite, in which the bridegroom touches the *toran* with his sword, before going into the marriage pavilion.

Vāhu: a daughter-in-law

Vēvai: father-in-law of one's daughter or son, male relatives by marriage

Vēvan: mother-in-law of one's daughter or son, female relative by marriage

